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THE SPORT OF KINGS

IAN HAY

A Domestic Comedy in Three Acts

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—SAMUEL FRENCH LIMITED—

THE SPORT OF KINGS

A Domestic Comedy in Three Acts

BY

IAN HAY

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY LRC

SAMUEL FRENCH LIMITED

LONDON

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY



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THE SPORT OF KINGS

Produced at the Savoy Theatre on September 8th, 1924, with the following cast of characters :—

ALGERNON SPRIGGE	<i>Mr. Basil Foster.</i>
SIR REGINALD TOOTHILL, Bart.	<i>Mr. Frank Denton.</i>
A BARMAID	<i>Miss Gladys Hamilton.</i>
DULCIE PRIMROSE	<i>Miss Rosaline Courtneidge.</i>
MRS. PURDIE	<i>Miss Mary Jerrold.</i>
AMOS PURDIE, J.P.	<i>Mr. E. Holman Clark.</i>
BATES	<i>Mr. Hugh E. Wright.</i>
JOE PURDIE	<i>Mr. Robin Irvine.</i>
KATIE PURDIE	<i>Miss Ena Grossmith.</i>
LIZZIE	<i>Miss Hilda Scarlet.</i>
JANE	<i>Miss Adele Dixon.</i>
COOK	<i>Miss Minnie Rayner.</i>
ALBERT	<i>Master Arthur Harding.</i>
PANAMA PETE.	<i>Mr. Griffith Humphreys.</i>
POLICE SERGEANT	<i>Mr. W. T. Elworthy.</i>
A NEWSBOY.	
RACEGOERS, etc.	

SCENES

ACT I—SCENE I.—*The "Champagne Only" Bar at a Suburban Race Meeting.*

SCENE II.—*The Library, Newstead Grange. (Three weeks later.)*

ACTS II AND III.—*The same.*

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THE SPORT OF KINGS

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The “ Champagne Only ” Bar at a Suburban Race Meeting.
A locomotive whistle outside. Sudden silence.*

BARMAID. That's the last train, gentlemen !

(There is much confusion. Everybody drains his glass and puts it down hastily, and there is a general exodus R. with much talking. The bar is now left clear, revealing two figures sitting on stools with their backs to the audience and their elbows on the counter. Both are dressed in racing clothes, with field-glasses. Both figures sit motionless. The BARMAID is busy up in the corner wiping glasses. Presently the two men turn towards one another. The taller is ALGY SPRIGGE, usually a cheerful and debonair individual, but a little discouraged at the present moment by a bad day ; the other is SIR REGINALD TOOTHILL, BARONET, a chronic pessimist and grouser. There is a bottle of champagne standing between them. ALGY refills TOOTHILL'S glass and his own.)

ALGY *(briskly)*. Well, here's hoping for better luck next week, Toots ! *(He raises his glass and drinks.)*

TOOTHILL *(with gloomy impressiveness)*. There isn't going to be any next week.

ALGY. Oh ! Why ? The end of the world—or Found Drowned ?

TOOTHILL. Algy, is this a time for irreverent frivolity ? You know the luck I've been having.

ALGY. But tell me—why is there going to be no next week ?

TOOTHILL *(with mournful dignity)*. I merely intended to imply that I should not be racing next week, or the week after, or the week after that.

ALGY. Have you only got those clothes till Saturday—or what ?

TOOTHILL. It is my intention to give up racing.

ALGY. Give up racing ? My good fellow, what are you going to do instead ? You can't be idle, you know ; we must all put our shoulders to the wheel, these days.

TOOTHILL. I shall accept a commercial appointment—in my uncle's glue business.

ALGY. That ought to be easier to stick to than some you have tried. But you can't give up racing altogether.

TOOTHILL. Why not?

ALGY. No normal human being can do without a little gamble now and then.

TOOTHILL. Rot! Only a few people gamble!

ALGY. Everybody gambles!

TOOTHILL. I tell you, there are millions of people who have never been on a race-course or backed a horse in their lives.

ALGY. There are lots of other perfectly good forms of gambling besides backing horses. Why do twenty thousand people go to watch a man jump out of a balloon? To see the parachute work?

TOOTHILL. No; on the off-chance that it won't!

ALGY. Precisely! It's suspense, uncertainty, we are after. Football coupons, crossword puzzle competitions, sixpenny chances in the lucky dip at the church bazaar! We are all gamblers! (*To the BARMAID suddenly.*) Aren't we, dear?

BARMAID. I beg your pardon, sir?

ALGY. I was saying to my little friend here that *everybody* simply has to have a flutter occasionally. Don't you?

BARMAID. Oh, yes, sir. Sometimes a gentleman tips me a good thing over the bar, here, just as you might, and I send the dishwasher out to put a shilling on for me.

ALGY. Exactly. (*To TOOTHILL.*) You see! (*To the BARMAID.*) You are engaged, of course?

BARMAID. Yes, sir.

ALGY. Well, your young gentleman—doesn't he occasionally put a bit on?

BARMAID. No, sir.

TOOTHILL (*much pleased*). You see!

BARMAID. I put it on for him. In his position, he can't.

ALGY. Why? Who is he? What is he?

BARMAID. I am not sure what he does for a living, sir. You have to know your young gentleman for quite a long time before you can ask him a question like that. But he's a Sunday-school teacher when he's not at business; and it wouldn't do—

ALGY (*triumphantly to TOOTHILL*). You see! Everybody's doing it! (*He lights a cigarette.*)

TOOTHILL (*gloomily*). Yes, and everybody seems to win except me. (*He turns to the BARMAID.*) There were seventeen starters in the last race—

(*A small Boy enters with an evening paper.*)

Boy (*to TOOTHILL*). Evening paper! Six-thirty News! My last one, Captain. You take it, and finish the lot for me.

(TOOTHILL *is much annoyed at being interrupted in his address to the BARMAID.*)

TOOTHILL. Go away!

BOY (to ALGY). You take it, my lord. It will bring you luck.

(ALGY *feels in his pocket and brings out some silver.*)

ALGY. I'm afraid I haven't any coppers, sonny. Have you got change for a shilling?

BOY. No, sir. I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll toss you—a shilling or nothing.

ALGY (to TOOTHILL). You see! There's your shilling, my lad. (*He takes the paper and hands the boy a shilling.*)

BOY. Thank you, guv'nor! There's your paper! (*He runs out L. and whistles on his fingers.*) Hi! Bill! Wait a minute!

ALGY (*unfolding the paper*). It's a universal instinct, Toots. If people don't gamble one way they do it another. Why, churchwardens do it!

TOOTHILL. Nonsense!

ALGY. Here you are, right away! (*Indicating newspaper.*) Listen. Here is a dear old boy getting up at a missionary meeting and saying, "I will give a thousand pounds towards the cost of shipping another consignment of missionaries to Timbuctoo"—or words to that effect—"provided"—

TOOTHILL. I knew there'd be a catch about it.

ALGY. It's where the gambling instinct comes in—"provided nine other public-spirited persons do the same within the next three months." Think of the risks that old sportsman has taken! Think of the thrills he'll have during the next three months! Waking up at night all of a doodah, after dreaming that nine other old shysters have rung in nine similar promises, and that all ten of them are now in the soup!

TOOTHILL. That's different. That old chap is trying to give money away, not make it.

ALGY. He's trying to acquire a reputation for generosity without paying for it, my lad, and that comes to precisely the same thing. Something for nothing, that's what he's after! (*He resumes his study of the evening paper.*)

TOOTHILL (*perseveringly, to the BARMAID*). I backed three of them. One was left at the post, another finished last, and the other stopped to eat a dandelion.

BARMAID (*briskly*). Yes, sir. Will you have any more wine? I am going to close the bar now.

ALGY (*looking up from his paper*). Newstead Races next week, Toots. Where shall we stay?

TOOTHILL (*coldly*). I am never going to another race meeting again.

ALGY. No, I know you're not. You've told me so every Monday since the Lincolnshire Handicap. I only mention it because we ought to be seeing about rooms. There isn't much accommodation at Newstead, and what there is is rotten.

TOOTHILL (*firmly*). I will not stay at the "George."

ALGY. I thought you weren't going at all.

TOOTHILL. I meant to imply that if one had gone, one would not have stayed at the "George."

ALGY (*mimicking his precise manner*). I do not suppose that one would have got in. (*He turns over his paper.*) Hallo! How long the arm of coincidence is!

TOOTHILL (*sulkily*). Yes; and it's a small world, and it never rains but it pours; and it's love that makes the world go round; and an apple at night is the shepherd's delight. Any more?

ALGY. In quite a different part of the paper, and everything. Listen! (*Reads.*) "Paying guests. A refined home in a country mansion of historic interest—Newstead Grange, Newstead, Surrey—is offered to two earnest young men. Wide prospect; gravel soil. Terms to be arranged. Would include separate rooms, use of bath—of course that doesn't interest you—"meals with family, and participation in all the exercises of a Christian household. Abstainers preferred."

TOOTHILL. What is an abstainer, exactly? (*He refills his glass.*)

ALGY. I'm not quite sure. (*To BARMAID.*) Do you know what an abstainer is, dear?

BARMAID. I rather think, sir, it's a gentleman who only drinks when he's by himself.

TOOTHILL. Who is offering this comfortable home, anyway?

ALGY (*continuing*). "Apply Mr. Amos Purdie, Justice of the Peace, at above address."

(BARMAID goes off R.)

(*With sudden inspiration.*) Look here, Toots, we're not doing anything this week. We'll go down to Newstead Grange to-morrow, as paying guests.

TOOTHILL. My poor lad, what on earth for?

ALGY. I want to prove my theory. Toots, will you take a bet?

TOOTHILL (*promptly*). Done! What is it? (*Produces betting book.*)

ALGY. I bet you a level hundred that I make this old stiff—(*consulting paper*)—Amos Purdie, J.P., back a horse within the week that we spend beneath his roof. Are you on?

TOOTHILL (*suddenly cheering up*). Righto! A hundred.

ALGY. Stout fellow!

(TOOTHILL and ALGY shake hands.)

TOOTHILL. And while we are there we can see the races.

(ALGY *laughs.*)

But, Algy!

ALGY. Well?

TOOTHILL. Have you considered what life will be like at Newstead Grange? Up at dawn; family prayers; breakfast; tepid tea and some one else's table napkin. Midday dinner—roast mutton with blue slides in it; and stewed rhubarb. Domestic evening; Ludo and Beggar-my-neighbour; cup of cocoa; bed by ten. And no extension nights, my lad!

ALGY. It will do you good. The simple life, every time.

TOOTHILL. And there probably won't be a girl within fifty miles of the place!

ALGY. Precisely. I am going to Newstead to be rid of them—the whole sex.

TOOTHILL. Rot!

ALGY. Yes, I'm fed up with the lot.

TOOTHILL. You? All-night Algy? Algy the Ornithologist!

ALGY. Ornithologist no more. I'm through with the entire aviary.

TOOTHILL. What are you going to do instead? Start an aquarium?

ALGY. Exactly. I'm going to the country, to study Pond Life.

(BARMAID *returns.*)

TOOTHILL (*gaping*). Pond Life?

ALGY. Yes. I'm going to sink into a place where never a ripple disturbs the surface of existence . . .

TOOTHILL (*hastily passing ALGY's glass*). For goodness' sake have some more of this!

ALGY. Thank you, Toots, I have had my fling. At Newstead Grange I shall find peace. I shall win that hundred from you, of course——

TOOTHILL. Oh, will you!

ALGY. Yes. But otherwise I shall vegetate. No more girls! No more champagne for supper. No more small sodas for breakfast! Wonderful!

BARMAID. Time, gentlemen, please!

TOOTHILL (*drinks*). Well, here's hoping—a hundred of the best!

ALGY (*dreamily*). Purdie, and Pond Life! (*Drinks.*)

BLACK OUT

CURTAIN

SCENE II.—*The Library at Newstead Grange, three days later.*

TIME.—*Two o'clock on a chilly afternoon in early September.*

It is a pleasant room with a wide open fireplace, L. The fireplace once burned coal, but now a small gas fire is installed, which is lit. There is a large French window at the back, opening on to a terrace. The window is closed. There is a gallery running across the back wall, just above the window, fitted with bookshelves. The L. end of the gallery is reached by a staircase at the top of which is an exit. There is a window in the gallery looking off R. Scene plan and essential furniture are at the end of the play.

DULCIE is discovered typing from the dictaphone. She is an attractive girl of about twenty-one, distinguished by a certain gracious, easy-going tolerance of everybody and everything. She has come down in the world, but is not in the least embittered by the fact. The telephone rings, DULCIE removes her earpiece, rises, and sits down on the chair behind the table, takes up the telephone which stands on the L. side of the table, and answers.

DULCIE. Yes, this is Newstead Grange. Mr. Purdie's Secretary speaking. Who? Sir Reginald what? Toot—oh!—Toothill? (*Listens again.*) What advertisement? I know nothing about advertisements, I am afraid. Will it do if I take a message? Mr. Purdie is engaged at present. (*She takes a pad and writes.*) "Sir Reginald Toothill and Mr. Prig have arrived at Newstead. They have lunched at 'The George'"—(*to herself: Poor things!*)—"and are ready to come and discuss final arrangements with Mr. Purdie." Does Mr. Purdie know? Have you an appointment? You are coming to *what*? To make your home with us? Oh! Well, if you don't hear from me within the next quarter of an hour, you can come and try. Thank you—good-bye! (*She hangs up the receiver, still looking rather puzzled.*)

(MRS. PURDIE enters L. down the stair. She is a kindly, rather vacant woman, whom twenty years of married life with MR. PURDIE have reduced to a self-effacing automaton.)

MRS. PURDIE (*anxiously*). Have you had anything to eat, Miss Primrose?

DULCIE. Yes, thank you, Mrs. Purdie. The housemaid brought me a nice poached egg.

MRS. PURDIE. Mr. Purdie forgot to cut your usual slice off the joint at lunch, and nobody liked to remind him. I am so sorry, my dear. He is a little upset to-day.

DULCIE. What's upset him this time?

MRS. PURDIE. Well, it's rather difficult to say, because he is not speaking to me just now—except in writing.

DULCIE. Oh, it's slips of blue paper again, is it?



(DULCIE opens a drawer, takes out a packet of slips of blue paper and lays them in readiness on the table beside the inkstand.)

MRS. PURDIE. Yes, for two weeks. I am afraid I am a little trying at times, you know. I stupidly forgot to order coal. At least, the cook forgot to remind me; and Mr. Purdie found that she had been burning the best household coal in the kitchen range for three days.

DULCIE. So you are sentenced to a fortnight of silent reproof?

MRS. PURDIE. Yes, dear.

DULCIE. Well, some people might envy you!

MRS. PURDIE. Oh, hush, dear! Are you warm enough? It's rather a raw day for September. This little gas stove doesn't throw out much heat, does it? Yes! No! Still, it is economical, isn't it? It must have been wickedly wasteful burning good coal in that great fireplace all day, as Mr. Purdie says they did. (*Confused.*) I beg your pardon, my dear. I was forgetting this was your old home.

DULCIE. That's all right, Mrs. Purdie. We did burn coals here pretty freely in the old days. Candles, too—at both ends, perhaps! But you don't know what has upset Mr. Purdie?

MRS. PURDIE. Well, I think it is the races. But he hasn't spoken to me all to-day, and at lunch he only spoke to Joe and Katie once, and that was to tell them to finish up their fat. So I'm not sure.

DULCIE. It may be the Super-Tax. The second demand note came in this morning. He will have to pay it soon.

MRS. PURDIE. Isn't Super-Tax dreadful? Sometimes I wish that Mr. Purdie hadn't made all that money during the War, and then we shouldn't have to give back so much now. Super-Tax seems to make him angrier than anything. (*Voice of PURDIE is heard off.*) Hush!

VOICE OF PURDIE (*off*). Jane, this is the second time this week that I have been tripped up by the vacuum cleaner!

MRS. PURDIE. Here he is, dear.

(*Enter R. AMOS PURDIE. He is a thick-set, aggressive man of about fifty. He wears a semi-clerical frock-coat and a black bow tie. He takes no notice of his wife, but seats himself at the writing-table and examines his correspondence. There is a solemn silence. Suddenly he notices the gas fire.*)

MRS. PURDIE (*timidly*). Amos!

MR. PURDIE. Will you touch the bell, Miss Primrose?

(*DULCIE does so. The bell is by the door L. There is another silence.*)

MRS. PURDIE. Amos!

(*MR. PURDIE takes no notice.*)

Mrs. Scrooby has asked me to tea this afternoon. May I go, or would you like me to stay in?

(Enter BATES, the Butler, R. He is an intensely respectable and dignified person.)

BATES. You rang, sir?

MR. PURDIE. Bates, who lit this gas fire?

BATES. Possibly the between-maid, sir.

MR. PURDIE. No fires are to be lit in this house between the months of May and October without my authority.

BATES. The young person shall be reprimanded, sir.

MR. PURDIE. I prefer to reprimand her myself. Summon her!

BATES. May I suggest that you summon the entire domestic staff, sir? Pardon the presumption, sir!

MR. PURDIE. Why should I summon them?

BATES. Newstead Races, sir—next week. I fear their occurrence will have a demoralizing influence upon your household, sir, the scene of operations being so close to your grounds—

MR. PURDIE (*glancing out of the window, angrily*). At my very door!

BATES. I have already most earnestly warned my fellow-servants against going near the course next week; but I thought perhaps a word from you, sir, especially to Albert—

MR. PURDIE. Your suggestion is a very proper one, Bates. I will address them at once.

BATES. Very good, sir. (*Exit R.*)

MRS. PURDIE. Amos!

MR. PURDIE. Miss Primrose, did I hear the telephone a few moments ago?

DULCIE. Yes. There was a message for you. Sir Reginald Toothill, I think, and Mr. Prig—

MR. PURDIE. Sprigge.

DULCIE. Sorry. Sprigge—are at “The George,” and want to come and make their home with you.

MR. PURDIE (*in a satisfied tone*). Ah!

(*There is a knock at the door L.*)

Am I never to be left in peace?

(DULCIE goes over to the door, and opens it.)

Who is there?

DULCIE. Katie and Joe, Mr. Purdie.

MR. PURDIE. Send them away.

DULCIE (*through the door*). Go away!

MR. PURDIE. On second thoughts, admit them.

DULCIE. Come in!

(Enter KATIE, with her hobbledehoy twin brother JOE, aged eighteen. KATIE is very angelic and demure in the presence of her father. They stand down L. nervously. DULCIE returns to her seat.)

MR. PURDIE. Well?

JOE. Father, I have been asked to go and shoot partridges on the twenty-fourth. Can I?

MR. PURDIE. Why should you indulge in senseless and wasteful butchery? What are poulterers for?

JOE. It keeps us pretty fit, father, and all that.

MR. PURDIE. Fit! How can you keep fit, as you term it, in the demoralizing atmosphere of a modern country house, with its drinking and gambling parties?

(JOE looks dismally at KATIE; she whispers something.)

JOE. It isn't as if I had to pay an hotel bill, father.

MR. PURDIE. No, but you will be called upon, at my expense, to augment the salaries of a butler, a footman, a housemaid, head-keeper, and probably a chauffeur. It is such parasites as these who should be paying Super-Tax. You will stay at home.

(There is a disappointed silence.)

Is your sister included in the invitation?

KATIE. No, father.

MR. PURDIE (to KATIE). Then why are you here?

KATIE (crossing towards the desk). It was about something else. But it will do when you're less ratty—occupied!

MR. PURDIE. I am never too busy to listen to a reasonable request.

KATIE (breathlessly). I have been invited to the Fancy Ball on Friday week. I—I could make my own clothes, and my ticket is being given to me, and I could get a lift in some one's motor; so—it wouldn't cost anything at——

MR. PURDIE. Friday week? Is that during the period of those—races?

KATIE (innocently). Yes—I rather think it is.

MR. PURDIE (thoughtfully). Ah!

(A pause. Then BATES enters R.)

BATES. The staff is mustered, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Mustard?

BATES. Assembled, sir. Shall I introduce them?

MR. PURDIE. Yes.

(BATES holds the door wide open, and signals to the others to enter. To JOE and KATIE, who are drifting towards the door L.)

MR. PURDIE. Remain!

(Enter COOK, JANE, TWEENY and ALBERT. All are obviously in great awe of their employer. They range themselves in a row, thus :)

BATES O	DULCIE O	PURDIE O	MRS. P. O
ALBERT O			
TWEENY O			JOE and
JANE O			KATIE
COOK O			

MR. PURDIE. Are all present ?

BATES. This is the entire indoor staff, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Good ! I will address the gardener and the chauffeur separately. First of all, this waste of gas. Who is responsible ?

(BATES makes signals to TWEENY, who is thrust forward, paralysed with fear, by ALBERT.)

BATES. This young person, sir.

MR. PURDIE (to TWEENY). What is your name ?

TWEENY (in a faint squeak). Lizzie, sir.

MR. PURDIE. What ?

LIZZIE (shouting). Lizzie, sir !

MR. PURDIE. Did you light this gas fire ?

TWEENY (beginning to sniff). Yes, sir. I didn't know I was doing wrong, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Turn it out.

TWEENY. Yes, sir.

(She does so, sniffing harder than ever, and returns to her place in the line.)

MR. PURDIE. Bates, you, I know, will see that good gas is no longer wasted.

BATES. You may rely upon me, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Jane, yesterday evening, about the hour of nine o'clock, I saw you cross the lawn in a hurried and rather furtive manner.

JANE (confused). I'd popped out to post a letter, sir.

(ALBERT breaks into a giggle. MR. PURDIE glances at him, then he subsides immediately. BATES touches ALBERT upon the shoulder and frowns at him.)

MR. PURDIE. No member of the indoor staff of this house is permitted to leave it, on any pretext, after nightfall, even for the shortest period.

JANE. No, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Bates, you will see that Jane complies with this rule in future.

BATES. I shall make a point of it, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Cook, what are you burning in the kitchen range now?

COOK (*with a stately bow*). Coal, sir.

MR. PURDIE (*impatiently*). Of what kind?

COOK. Kitchen nuts, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Continue to do so—in moderation.

COOK. It shall be attended to, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Miss Primrose, last week's bill from the Co-operative Stores, if you please.

(DULCIE rises and brings it to him.)

BATES (*after a stern look at the COOK*). Will there be anything further, sir?

MR. PURDIE. Yes, Bates, upon August the eighth one dozen bottles of dry ginger ale were ordered and delivered at this house. On August the twenty-third another dozen were ordered. I presume the first dozen had been consumed?

BATES. I imagine so, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Then why have I not been credited with twelve empty bottles?

BATES. I would suggest an error on the part of the Co-operative Stores, sir.

MR. PURDIE. I authorize you to visit the Stores and collect the money due.

BATES. I will attend to the matter at once, sir.

MR. PURDIE. You need not hand the sum recovered to me, as I shall deduct it from your wages.

BATES. I thank you, sir.

(ALBERT is much amused.)

MR. PURDIE. Lastly, a word to all of you about next week—the Race Week—especially to you, Albert. During the greater part of that week this fair country-side will be overrun by the fast society of London, reinforced by local riff-raff. By day, they will hold their degrading revels upon the racecourse, a few hundred yards from this roof-tree. By night the scene of the orgy will be transferred to the town, where I understand there is to be a ball.

KATIE. It's a charity ball, father—for the blind.

MR. PURDIE. Why should we mock at infirmity by cutting capers? Besides, the blind should be encouraged to look after themselves. There is a blind man at the corner of High Street, not a mile from here, who is a shining example. You may have observed him.

JOE. Oh, you mean Barney——

(KATIE nudges JOE.)

Yes, I think I have.

MR. PURDIE. He sings Moody and Sankey hymns very sweetly, and is most respectful in his demeanour to me. I gave him a penny not three weeks ago. Now understand. You will all remain at home throughout the period of next week's—er—carnival of shame. You will not go outside the grounds, and you will confine yourselves to the side of the house remote from the racecourse. This room in particular, the staircase window of which commands a view of the racing, will be out of bounds to every one—except myself, Mrs. Purdie, Miss Primrose, and Bates. I have spoken!

BATES (*to the servants in a low voice*). 'Op it!

(BATES opens the door, and the servants file out. ALBERT, who has been exchanging mysterious glances with JOE and KATIE, has to be touched on the shoulder by BATES.)

MR. PURDIE. Now, Miss Primrose, what did you say to Sir Reginald Toothill?

DULCIE. I told him that they could come. Unless I told them not to. Is that correct?

MR. PURDIE. That is correct. They come as paying guests. Did they say anything about their luggage?

MRS. PURDIE. Luggage, dear?

(MR. PURDIE looks sharply at MRS. PURDIE, as if reminded of something. Then he scribbles a line on one of the blue slips and gives it to DULCIE.)

MR. PURDIE. Kindly hand that to Mrs. Purdie.

(DULCIE does so.)

MRS. PURDIE (*having read it, meekly*). Yes, dear. (*Exit upstairs.*)

KATIE (*crosses to desk*). Then I can't go to the ball, father?

MR. PURDIE. You cannot. Dancing is no fit occupation for a young girl. Leave me now, and seek more profitable recreation.

(JOE and KATIE go out, dejectedly.)

No young woman should ever allow herself to remain within three feet of a man who is neither her husband, father, nor brother.

DULCIE (*pushing back her chair slightly*). Good gracious! I didn't know!

MR. PURDIE. And under no circumstances should she ever permit him to lay a hand upon her. I trust you do not dance, Miss Primrose?

DULCIE. Oh, rather! I have danced hundreds of time in this very room—in the old days.

MR. PURDIE. It is not necessary to remind me of your reduced circumstances. If there had been less dancing in this house perhaps it would not have passed from the possession of your family into

firmer hands. Perhaps your father might have been spared to a life of——

DULCIE (*steadily*). Do you know, I really don't think we need discuss that.

MR. PURDIE (*astonished*). I beg your pardon!

DULCIE. You have been very good to me, Mr. Purdie, giving me employment in my old home when I probably wouldn't have got it elsewhere, and I am grateful. But we will leave my old father out of the conversation, if you don't mind. You see, he's dead, and can't answer back. (*Taking up the Super-Tax form, briskly.*) Shall I write a cheque for your Super-Tax? You'll have to pay it sooner or later, you know.

MR. PURDIE. I shall not pay it until I am forced. By delaying a few months I save the interest on my money. It is the small economies that help, Miss Primrose. (*Sound of motor; motor pulls up.*) What is that?

DULCIE. It sounds like the Ford from "The George." The one from the station is an octave higher. I expect it's the two gentlemen arriving who are going to help us with the Super-Tax.

MR. PURDIE. Kindly inquire of Bates.

(*Exit DULCIE. MRS. PURDIE appears on the stairs.*)

MRS. PURDIE. Amos, two strange young men have driven up to the door. Are they the Paying Guests you mentioned?

(MR. PURDIE *scribbles something on a blue slip and hands it.* MRS. PURDIE *having read it.*)

Yes, Amos. (*Crossing to the door L.*) I suppose cotton sheets will do? (*Exit MRS. PURDIE, staircase.*)

(BATES *enters R.*)

BATES. Sir Reginald Toothill and Mr. Sprigge to see you, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Where are they?

BATES. In the hall, sir.

MR. PURDIE. Show them in here.

BATES. Very good, sir. (*Exit R.*)

MR. PURDIE. I will join them in a moment. I have a communication to make to Mrs. Purdie. (*Exit upstairs, with another blue slip.*)

ALGY'S VOICE (*outside*). This way for the wide prospect and gravel soil, Toots!

TOOTHILL'S VOICE. I know I'm going to hate this place!

(*Enter ALGY and TOOTHILL R., ushered in by BATES.*)

ALGY (*looking round, turning to TOOTHILL*). Hallo, where's his ribs, I wonder!

TOOTHILL (*depressed*). I don't know, and I don't care.

BATES (*still at the door*). Mr. Purdie will be with you in a moment, gentlemen.

ALGY (*politely*). Tell him a couple of earnest young abstainers have come to sign on, will you?

BATES. He will rejoice to hear it, sir. May I have your keys?

ALGY. Here you are. My bag isn't locked; but we have some heavy luggage at "The George" coming up presently.

TOOTHILL. "The George" is a filthy hole!

BATES. Newstead is unfortunate in its hotel accommodation, sir.

ALGY. You mean to say there is no other place but "The George"?

BATES. Only "The Ugly Duckling," sir. A very low establishment indeed—chiefly frequented by betting men. I'll unpack your bag, sir.

(*Exit BATES R.*)

TOOTHILL (*shivering*). I shall get pneumonia here. You know I have a weak chest, Algy.

ALGY. It is a bit September-morny! I wish I'd put on everything mother told me to when I got up this morning. (*He crosses to the fireplace.*) What about applying a match to this superb specimen of the gasfitters' art? (*He strikes a match and lights the gas fire.*)

TOOTHILL (*lights a cigarette*). I wonder if this is the only place to sit in. (*He flings himself on the sofa and puts his feet up on the cushions.*) This is a mouldy sofa!

ALGY (*beginning tour of inspection*). Telephone—good! We can work here, Toots; I was afraid we might have to use a call office.

TOOTHILL. By the way, what were you ringing up Martin Maggs for this morning? Have you heard of something?

ALGY. Maggs? I was warning him to be prepared to open an account with a new and lucrative client at any moment.

TOOTHILL. What name?

ALGY. Purdie. You haven't forgotten our bet? I have to make Purdie back a horse within a week, or lose a hundred of the best to you.

TOOTHILL. By the way, the week began this morning—at dawn.

ALGY. Shylock! (*Coming to a collection of framed photographs on mantelpiece.*) Aha! The portrait gallery of the House of Purdie! A solemn spectacle! (*He picks up a photograph and displays it.*) Aunt Martha, by moonlight! (*He shows another.*) Daughter Lily, aged eight, reciting "We are Seven." (*He picks up a large photograph of Mr. Purdie.*) My lord, himself, I think. One of the strong, silent ones, I gather. (*Puts down the photograph. Crosses to the writing-table and deposits cigarette ash on MR. PURDIE'S inkstand.*) And here is his desk—the desk of a magistrate, with

revolving judgment seat adjacent. (*He sits down in PURDIE's revolving chair behind the table, draws up his knees under his chin, and propels himself round and round.*) Tell you what, Toots! Bet you half a crown I go round in once. I'm getting giddy! Ooh! (*Spins himself round.*)

(*Suddenly in his revolutions he catches sight of Mr. PURDIE, and lets his feet down abruptly.* MR. PURDIE *has descended the stair and is now standing scowling impressively under the gallery.*)

(*Rising, and staggering R. to sofa.*) Oh, I beg your pardon! Mr. Purdie, I presume? I did not notice you had joined us. (*Indicating TOOTHILL.*) This is my friend, Sir Reginald Toothill.

MR. PURDIE (*grimly*). Good morning, gentlemen.

TOOTHILL (*rising and bowing languidly*). Morning!

MR. PURDIE (*to ALGY*). I presume it was you who answered my advertisement?

ALGY. Yes.

MR. PURDIE. You think you are suited to surroundings such as these?

ALGY (*airily*). Oh, we can suit ourselves to any surroundings.

MR. PURDIE (*sarcastically*). I do not doubt it. (*He readjusts his revolving chair, with a severe expression.*) I am sorry you have been able to find no better ash-tray than my presentation inkstand.

ALGY. It'll do perfectly, thanks! (*Puts his ash in.*) Will you smoke? (*Offering cigarette-case.*) These are gentlemen, those are Players'. No? Perhaps you're right. May we sit down? Sit down, Toots!

(PURDIE *puts out gas fire.* ALGY *sits on the sofa beside TOOTHILL.*

ALGY *nudges TOOTHILL, and goes through the motions of turning up his collar and shivering like a starving beggar.* MR. PURDIE *turns quickly.* ALGY *hastily composes himself.* MR. PURDIE *sits at the writing-table, and takes a letter out of a locked drawer.*)

MR. PURDIE. Here is your letter, answering my advertisement. You did not ask my terms.

ALGY. No, I forgot.

TOOTHILL. He always does.

MR. PURDIE. On the other hand, you enclosed no bank reference.

ALGY. No.

TOOTHILL. My God, no!

ALGY (*whispering*). Shut up, you fool!

MR. PURDIE. Perhaps you would prefer to pay a small deposit instead?

ALGY. Certainly.

MR. PURDIE. Shall we say fifty pounds each?

ALGY. Fifty pounds?

TOOTHILL. There's no harm in saying fifty pounds.

ALGY. By all means.

MR. PURDIE (*having written this clause in the agreement down*). Then, as to terms. (*Tentatively.*) Two pounds a day per head?

(ALGY looks at TOOTHILL.)

TOOTHILL. Does that include wine?

MR. PURDIE (*severely*). Sir, I am an abstainer, and you gave me to understand that you were the same!

ALGY. Ah, you meant *total* abstainers?

TOOTHILL (*playing up*). Ah!

ALGY. We're only partial. We don't drink *all* the time.

TOOTHILL. We've tried; it can't be done.

ALGY. But I suppose we could send out for what little we require?

MR. PURDIE. Instinctively I cry, "Never!"

ALGY and TOOTHILL (*disappointed*). Oh! (*Both rise.*)

MR. PURDIE. On the other hand, I must not allow my lifelong convictions to obstruct the obligations of hospitality.

ALGY and TOOTHILL (*relieved*). Ah! (*Both sit.*)

MR. PURDIE. Steps shall be taken to provide you, in reason, with what you may imagine you require.

ALGY. That's very handsome of you!

MR. PURDIE. I think the simplest way will be for you to pay me by the glass.

TOOTHILL. Dirty old pincher!

ALGY (*politely*). I see. We pay at the door on leaving the dining-room?

MR. PURDIE. There is no need to be so punctilious as that. Weekly will do. My secretary will keep a note of the amount consumed.

ALGY. I trust the extra strain will not be too much for him.

MR. PURDIE. My secretary is a lady.

ALGY (*a little annoyed*). Oh!

TOOTHILL (*quite cheerfully*). Ah!

ALGY (*nudging him—whispers*). Take a pull at yourself.

MR. PURDIE (*writing*). Then we may regard those points as settled. Fifty pounds deposit, two pounds per head per day, inclusive. Wine as consumed. (*Writing.*) Laundry, of course, will be extra.

(ALGY and TOOTHILL gaze at one another comprehendingly. They realize the kind of house they have got into.)

By the way, have you brought your own towels?

ALGY (*turning to TOOTHILL*). Have you brought a towel, Sir Reginald?

TOOTHILL. No.

ALGY. No, Mr. Purdie.

MR. PURDIE. I think I can arrange to obtain some for you, at

a reasonable figure. (*Having finished writing and bringing the paper over to the sofa, to ALGY.*) Will you kindly run your eye over this ?

(*ALGY takes it and shows it to TOOTHILL, who takes it.*)

TOOTHILL (*querulously*). We could live at the Ritz for all this.

ALGY (*reprovingly*). I think you forget, friend, that this figure includes participation in all the exercises of a Christian household. You cannot get that at the Ritz, can you, Mr. Purdie ?

MR. PURDIE. I cannot say. When I visit London I stay at the Old Mortality Hotel, Bloomsbury. Will you kindly affix your signature ?

(*ALGY signs the agreement and hands it to MR. PURDIE.*)

Thank you. Can you give me any indication of the length of your visit here ?

ALGY (*after an amused glance at TOOTHILL*). That, Mr. Purdie, depends almost entirely upon you.

MR. PURDIE. Upon me ?

ALGY. Yes. I see you have a telephone here.

MR. PURDIE. Yes. Local calls are threepence ; calls to London a shilling.

ALGY. We expect to be using the telephone a good deal while we are here, especially about lunch-time.

MR. PURDIE. Do you usually transact your business at lunch-time ?

ALGY. Well, ours is rather a peculiar business.

MR. PURDIE. May I inquire what your business is ?

ALGY. Perhaps I should call it a pleasure. We are—what shall I say ?

TOOTHILL. Punters.

ALGY. Punters.

MR. PURDIE. Punters ? Boat-builders ?

ALGY. No. Backers. We back horses.

MR. PURDIE (*thunderstruck*). Horses ? You wager money upon horses—for a living ?

TOOTHILL (*regretfully*). You couldn't always call it that.

(*MR. PURDIE rises from his chair, swelling with righteous indignation, and now points to the door.*)

MR. PURDIE. Leave my house, gentlemen !

TOOTHILL. I say, we have only just arrived !

(*ALGY and TOOTHILL both rise.*)

MR. PURDIE (*crosses to typist's table*). Leave my house—before you infect it by your presence !

TOOTHILL (*crossing to door with ALGY*). Look here, Algy, this is a bit too thick. What about it—eh ?

ALGY (*genuinely angry for the moment*). You're right, Toots, this is a bit above the odds. Let's get out.

(ALGY and TOOTHILL go R. to door, which TOOTHILL opens.)
You win!

(*Enter DULCIE door L.*)

No, by Jove, you don't!

(DULCIE goes to the desk and lays down some letters, keeping her back turned and speaking to MR. PURDIE.)

I say, why can't she turn round again?

TOOTHILL. It's no go, Algy. Let's get out. You've backed the wrong horse this time.

ALGY (*quickly*). Will you double that bet?

TOOTHILL. Done! (*Shake hands.*)

(ALGY opens door for DULCIE. *Bus. with hand on heart.* DULCIE walks out R.)

MR. PURDIE. You are still here, gentlemen!

TOOTHILL (*going*). No, we're not! (*To ALGY.*) Come on, you fool!

ALGY. Wait a minute. There is much in what Mr. Purdie says. (*Crosses to MR. PURDIE.*) Mr. Purdie, forgive me if I shocked your susceptibilities just now.

MR. PURDIE. You certainly did.

ALGY. I'm sorry.

MR. PURDIE. Perhaps I, too, was a little hasty. But we are simple, homely folk in this house. We do our best to keep the outside world at arm's length—especially such a world as you represent.

TOOTHILL. Come on, Algy!

ALGY. Patience, Sir Reginald! I see Mr. Purdie's point. (*To MR. PURDIE.*) Do you know anything of that world, Mr. Purdie?

MR. PURDIE. Nothing whatever, I am proud to say.

ALGY. Then how do you know you aren't depriving yourself of a modicum of innocent pleasure?

TOOTHILL. Bah!

MR. PURDIE. Horse-racing is sheer speculation, of the most demoralizing kind.

ALGY. So is selling what you haven't got, and buying what you couldn't pay for if you got it, on the Stock Exchange. That's done by quite the best people, Mr. Purdie.

MR. PURDIE. That is different. No man can be associated with the Turf, and remain respectable.

TOOTHILL. Hear, hear!

ALGY. Why not? Believe me, Mr. Purdie, a man can be a jockey or a bookmaker, or even sell cards on a race-course, and remain a good citizen and a model husband and father. My friend

Sir Reginald will corroborate me. He is neither of these things himself, but he will corroborate me.

MR. PURDIE (*with less assurance*). I flatter myself that I am a man of broad views, but I cannot believe all you say. (*Sits chair L.*)

ALGY (*sitting on desk*). Because you don't know! Why, you don't know the A B C of horse-backing. A successful punter is simply a man who knows his own mind. I knew a man a year or two ago who got wind of a really great thing for the Lincolnshire Handicap. He scraped together every penny he possessed and plumped it on a horse, and that horse won. (*Turning to TOOTHILL.*) What did White Bud win the Lincoln at, Toots?

TOOTHILL. Sixty-six to one.

ALGY (*to MR. PURDIE*). Sixty-six to one! That man made enough money out of that race to settle every debt he owed. Why, I believe he actually paid his income-tax.

MR. PURDIE (*startled—rises*). He paid his income-tax? You horrify me!

ALGY. You've only got to get used to the idea. Backing a horse is a perfectly simple and normal operation.

MR. PURDIE (*suddenly*). Describe it!

ALGY (*after a satisfied glance at TOOTHILL*). You must begin, of course, by finding out the right horse to back.

MR. PURDIE. I imagine that is essential.

ALGY. It is advisable.

MR. PURDIE (*cautiously*). Where can the necessary information be obtained?

ALGY. From the goodly fellowship of prophets.

MR. PURDIE. Prophets?

ALGY. Yes—Turf prophets. (*Takes a letter from his pocket. It is printed on vivid pink paper.*) I happen to have a small inspiration from one of them in my pocket now. Don't you like his taste in stationery? I get quite a lot of them. Shall I read it?

MR. PURDIE. If you are betraying no confidence.

ALGY. I think we can trust Mr. Purdie, Sir Reginald?

TOOTHILL. What is all this? (*Taking the letter and reading dismally.*) "Dear Sir,—I am writing to know if you can do with a couple of good winners for Windsor." (*Aside.*) Gurr!

ALGY (*quickly*). There is a race-meeting at Windsor to-day and to-morrow.

TOOTHILL. "I want you to WIN with me all through the season, as hundreds of others are doing, because I am, without boasting, the ONE MAN who can be your guide, philosopher, and friend——"
(*Groans.*)

ALGY. You see! Simply no thought for himself at all!

TOOTHILL (*dismally*). "At the King of Sports and the Sport of Kings!"

ALGY. Quite a literary fellow!

TOOTHILL. "Answer by return, in the enclosed stamped envelope——"

ALGY. He gives stamps away, and everything!

TOOTHILL. "And you shall have your wire in good time tomorrow, at my usual terms. Fear nothing, and all will be well. Hoping this finds you as it leaves me—Yours most sincerely, Joe Pepper, The Man on the Spot." (*Giving back letter, contemptuously.*) Take it!

MR. PURDIE. I think we have wasted enough valuable time. Would you like to see your rooms?

ALGY. Certainly. Come on, Toots! (*They go up.*)

MR. PURDIE. Both rooms face south. Do you get many of these ridiculous letters?

ALGY. Lots. (*He takes more letters from his pocket. Glancing through them.*) Honest John of Manchester—Red Hot Redge of Wandsworth—Alf. Salter, of the principal clubs.

MR. PURDIE. Where is the residence of this person Pepper?

ALGY. Post Restante, Clapham Common.

MR. PURDIE. And what was the reference to "a wire"?

ALGY. Joe wires us a winner every morning.

TOOTHILL. Optimist!

MR. PURDIE. Actually telegrams! Incredible! (*With elaborate indifference.*) Have you received one this morning?

ALGY. No, but I am expecting one. There is an outsider named Hobbledohy running in the three o'clock race at Windsor this afternoon, of which I hear persistent rumours. If Pepper tips him, I shall back him.

MR. PURDIE. At Windsor? Fifty miles from here? This afternoon? Can one gamble without being present?

ALGY. Oh yes. You employ what is known as a Turf Accountant, or Bookmaker.

MR. PURDIE. Are there really such persons?

ALGY. Certainly. (*He takes a little book from his pocket, and continues with renewed zest.*) I have here a combined calendar, diary and book of rules, issued by a most estimable firm trading as Martin Maggs, of Sackville Street, Piccadilly.

TOOTHILL (*gloomily*). Telegraphic address: "Maggie, Piccy, London."

MR. PURDIE. And can prudent people actually trust this person with their money?

ALGY. There is no need. You can telegraph the name of the horse and amount you want to back it for right up to the moment of starting the race, and after you win Mr. Maggs sends you the money.

TOOTHILL. After you lose, you send it to him.

MR. PURDIE. I have other recreations. Are you musical, Sir Reginald?

TOOTHILL. I go to music-halls——

ALGY. Musical evenings, a good deal!

MR. PURDIE. Capital! I play the 'cello a little. So you would send this man telegrams?

ALGY. I would.

TOOTHILL. He does!

MR. PURDIE. But are you not ashamed to put your name to these degrading documents?

ALGY. Well, a good many people are, so (*he looks sharply at PURDIE*) special provision is made for them.

MR. PURDIE. Ah! (*Edging closer.*) How?

ALGY (*after a glance at TOOTHILL*). They register a *nom de plume*, or pseudonym, with the bookmaker. They use a code as well. You will find in this volume a list of the names of various flowers—rose—lily——

TOOTHILL (*sadly*). Carnation——

ALGY. Rhododendron——

TOOTHILL (*despairingly*). Aspidistra.

ALGY. And so on. Each of these little blossoms signifies a different sum of money. All you have to do is to send a telegram of three words: Papyrus—Carnation—Pickwick, we'll say. That means Pickwick wants five pounds on Papyrus. Rhododendron is ten pounds; Aspidistra fifteen. Simple, isn't it? (*Handing him book R.*)

MR. PURDIE. And payment is made the following Monday?

TOOTHILL. By one side or the other.

MR. PURDIE. And these persons—these bookmakers—can they be absolutely relied upon to meet their obligations?

ALGY (*with a magnificent gesture*). Maggie Never Owes! Now perhaps we may be allowed to see our rooms?

MR. PURDIE. I will ring the bell.

ALGY. Then one of us will run down to "The George" and bring up our luggage. Will you go, Toots?

TOOTHILL (*resignedly*). I suppose so.

ALGY. And don't forget your cheque book! Two hundred of the best, I think!

TOOTHILL. Wait and see!

(*Enter BATES R.*)

MR. PURDIE. Show this gentleman the rooms.

BATES. With pleasure, sir. This way.

(*TOOTHILL goes upstairs after BATES. MR. PURDIE detains ALGY.*)

MR. PURDIE. Mr. Sprigge, you will kindly refrain, for the remainder of your visit here, from referring to this topic again.

ALGY. Mr. Purdie, I don't think it will be necessary. (*He laughs.*)

(*Exeunt.*)

(MR. PURDIE returns to the table. He picks up the tipster's letters, and he glances through them; then he examines MARTIN MAGG'S little handbook. He takes up the Super-Tax notice in one hand and JOE PEPPER'S letter in the other.)

MR. PURDIE (to himself). "He actually paid his income-tax."

(MR. PURDIE broods a little longer, then making a sudden resolution, presses the button on his desk. A faint buzz is heard L.)

"A successful punter is simply a man who knows his own mind."

(MR. PURDIE rings again. No one comes. He impatiently pulls the dictaphone towards him, puts in a cylinder and begins to dictate.)

I wonder how it would sound. (Dictates.) To Mr. Martin Maggs, 175 Sackville Street, Piccadilly, London. Sir: Yours—

(Enter DULCIE with a telegram.)

Miss Primrose, where have you been?

DULCIE. I was talking to Mrs. Purdie.

MR. PURDIE. I was compelled to use the dictaphone instead of dictating to you direct, as I prefer.

DULCIE. I'm sorry. Oh, by the way, Bates gave me this telegram—it's for Mr. Sprigge.

MR. PURDIE. For Mr. Sprigge? It may be urgent. We had better open it.

(As MR. PURDIE opens telegram, DULCIE crosses to her own desk and sits.)

It is not urgent, so far as I can see, but appears to refer to some private affair. I should not like Mr. Sprigge to think that we have been prying into his correspondence.

(Clock strikes.)

(MR. PURDIE gums up the envelope with a little gum from a gum-pot on the table, and lays the telegram beside the telephone.)

What time is that?

DULCIE (looking round at the clock). A quarter to three.

MR. PURDIE. So late? Never mind that letter at present. I have suddenly remembered a telegram I must send, before three o'clock. Take it down.

(DULCIE takes a telegraph form from the stationery box on the table.)

(Dictating.) "Maggie, Piccy, London. Hobbledehoy. Carnation. Letter follows. Amos Purdie, Newstead, Surrey." (Desperately.) No, not Carnation; Rhododendron! (Snatching the telegram.)

DULCIE. How do you spell it?

MR. PURDIE. Give it to me! I will write it myself. (*He does so.*)

(DULCIE watches him in calm surprise.)

DULCIE. Shall I take it across the park to Flitwick post office, or shall I send the boot boy?

MR. PURDIE (*taking out his watch*). I believe that clock is slow! Or else my watch is fast. I'm not sure. I will take it myself. It is—er—somewhat urgent. I shall be back in ten minutes, Miss Primrose. (*At window.*) How lovely the rhododendrons look! I mean carnations! (*He hurries out.*)

(*Left alone, DULCIE takes her seat at the writing-table c., where the dictaphone transmitter and a typewriter stand. She adjusts the ear-piece to her head, slipping a cylinder into the machine, and begins to type.*)

(ALGY enters by the stairs and stands for a little while gazing at DULCIE, who continues typing. Presently she becomes conscious of his presence, stops and turns.)

ALGY. Hallo! Hallo! 2LO! London calling! What's your wave-length?

(DULCIE looks at him calmly over her shoulder. *He is a little abashed.*)

I'm sorry.

(DULCIE calmly resumes her typing. *He continues to gaze rapily at her. Presently she stops, turns and sees him still standing in the same place.*)

DULCIE. Do you want to see Mr. Purdie?

ALGY. Does anybody want to see Mr. Purdie?

DULCIE. Whom do you want to see?

ALGY. You.

DULCIE. Me!

ALGY (*coming down*). Yes. I have something to say to you. I thought of it as soon as I set eyes on you.

DULCIE. Something to say to me?

ALGY. Something to ask you.

DULCIE. Well, why not ask it?

ALGY (*smiling*). I don't think I know you well enough yet.

(*She turns and looks at him severely, as if rebuking his frivolity. He smiles at her.*)

For the present let us occupy ourselves by becoming better acquainted. Is anybody likely to disturb us? (*Takes chair and sits near DULCIE.*)

DULCIE. Yes. Mr. Purdie will be back in a few minutes. He has gone to send a telegram.

ALGY. Then we'd better begin at once. (*Draws up a chair and*

sits beside her.) Shall I tell you a story, or sing you a little ballad, or ask a riddle? (*Glancing at dictaphone.*) Er—if you met Dick, and wanted to meet Dick again, what would you tell Dick to do? Give it up? You'd tell dictaphone! (*She gazes at him silently.*) I could keep you in hysterics all the afternoon with things like that.

DULCIE (*coldly*). Are you Sir Reginald Toothill?

ALGY. That's a nasty one! But I did ask for it. No, I have sent Toots down to "The George" for our things. Are you Miss Purdie?

DULCIE. No.

(*DULCIE is typing intermittently, pausing to answer questions.*)

ALGY. Good! And you are not a relation, by any misfortune—chance?

DULCIE. No.

ALGY. Capital! And the little name?

DULCIE (*composedly*). My name is Dulcie Primrose.

ALGY. I knew it would be!

DULCIE. You knew?

ALGY. Well, I just knew it wouldn't be Martha, or Bridget, or Rebecca, or anything of that kind. You see, we've got down to Christian names already. Good! What's that thing round your head—part of the dictaphone?

DULCIE. Yes.

ALGY. What does it do? Tell you a bedtime story, or something?

DULCIE. No; it dictates letters. (*Indulgently.*) I'll show you. (*She rises and goes to dictaphone instrument.*) Supposing you wanted to dictate a letter to someone.

ALGY. To whom?

DULCIE. Anybody. Your sister, or your mother—or your grandmother.

ALGY. That's a splendid notion. I haven't written to my grandmother for years. What do I do?

DULCIE (*handing him the mouthpiece*). Press that little trigger with your thumb: that will start the cylinder running.

(*ALGY presses DULCIE's hand.*)

I said the trigger.

(*ALGY, smiling vacantly, releases her hand.*)

Then dictate into this mouthpiece.

ALGY. Righto! (*Speaking into the mouthpiece.*) Ah!—er—h'm—My dearest Grandmother— (*Smiles contentedly at DULCIE.*) Thank you so much for the postal order. I went to a party last night, and met such a dear little girl, called Dulcie. She had blue eyes, and a blue frock, and silk—

DULCIE (*taking the mouthpiece from him*). Thank you, that will do. Now come over here and sit down and put this earpiece on.

ALGY (*sitting down and adjusting the earpiece*). What do I do next?

(DULCIE *has transferred the wax cylinder from the receiving machine to the transmitting machine.*)

DULCIE. Press that stud on the floor with your foot, and listen.

(ALGY *does so. A faint voice is heard squeaking into the earpiece.*)

ALGY. To Mr. Martin Maggs, one hundred and seven—(*Laughs.*)

DULCIE. Anything the matter?

ALGY. No. Just a bit of good news from the old folks! (*Listening.*) Why, here's my own voice! Now it's stopped. (*Looking down.*) Ah, I've taken my foot off the clutch. Here's the Granny bit. Ah, it's finished! Good night, everybody! (*Rising and taking off ear-phones.*) I like the dictaphone: I think I shall take it up.

DULCIE. Well, don't let Mr. Purdie catch you taking up this one, that's all. By the way, there's a telegram for you there.

ALGY. What? (*Still gazing at her.*)

DULCIE. A telegram for you—there!

ALGY (*taking it*). Thank you. Will you excuse me? (*Opening it and examining his fingers.*) It seems a bit gummy, this envelope.

DULCIE. Mr. Purdie thought it might be urgent. When he found it wasn't, he gummed it up again.

ALGY (*expressively*). Oh!

(ALGY *reads telegram, then looks at his watch.*)

H'm! And Mr. Purdie has gone out to send a telegram himself?

DULCIE. Yes.

ALGY. Ah!

DULCIE. Does this one require an answer? Is it important? (*She offers him a telegraph form.*)

ALGY. It's a communication from a prophet.

DULCIE. Major or minor?

ALGY. That we shall know shortly after three o'clock. I wish I knew now!

DULCIE (*turning on him suddenly*). Do you go in for racing?

ALGY. If by racing you mean do I risk my Saturday sixpence on an unpunctual quadruped—yes. (*Picks up telephone.*)

DULCIE (*suddenly and impulsively*). I wouldn't if I were you.

(ALGY *puts telephone down, looking up at DULCIE and smiling.*)

ALGY. Very well, then, I won't. I want to please you—awfully.

DULCIE (*rises—edging away*). Mr. Sprigge, may I tell you two things?

ALGY. As many as you like.

DULCIE. No young woman should ever allow a young man, not a relation, to remain within three feet of her. Secondly, we are not alone.

(JOE and KATIE have appeared in the veranda outside the window, signalling to be let in.)

ALGY. Good heavens! What are these?

DULCIE. They are the son and daughter of the house. They have been carefully brought up.

(DULCIE goes up and opens the window. JOE and KATIE come in.)

KATIE. Thank you, Dulcie dear. (Coming forward with JOE and greeting ALGY.) How do you do, Mr. Sprigge? I am Katie.

ALGY. How do you do, Katie. I'm Mr. Sprigge.

KATIE. This is Joe.

JOE. How do you do?

(ALGY shakes hands solemnly with JOE and KATIE.)

KATIE. Joe wants to ask you something.

JOE. No, you ask him!

KATIE. No, you!

JOE. All right. Mr. Sprigge, do you know anything?

ALGY. Know anything?

KATIE (very demurely). Yes. We want a nice winner or two for Windsor.

ALGY (off his guard). Well, as a matter of fact I have got a strong tip in my pocket at this very moment. (He produces a telegram.) But I'm afraid it's too late.

(ALGY turns to look at the clock, which marks five minutes to three, and finds DULCIE regarding him severely.)

ALGY. Er—ahem—hum! (He smiles feebly and trails off. Then recovering himself.) What I mean is, why should you regard me as an authority, my boy?

JOE. We found "The Sporting Times" and "The Jockey" in your overcoat pocket.

KATIE. So we thought you might know something.

ALGY. Miss Primrose was just informing me that you two didn't know anything.

JOE. No. That's why we are asking you.

ALGY (improving the occasion). And how far have you travelled down the slippery path?

KATIE. Not very far. You see, the only person we have to advise us is Albert.

JOE. He cleans the boots. Would you like to see him?

ALGY. I should love to see Albert.

KATIE (goes to window and calls). Albert!

(ALBERT comes in through the window. He touches his forelock and stands shuffling his feet.)

This is Albert.

ALGY. Good afternoon, Albert.

ALBERT. Afternoon, sir.

ALGY. I understand you are a student of form, Albert?

ALBERT. I follows 'orses a bit, sir.

ALGY. What was your selection for the three o'clock race this afternoon?

ALBERT. Jazz Baby, sir.

ALGY. Oh! Well, my information doesn't agree with yours. (*Reading the telegram.*) This telegram says: "Hobbledehoy a dead snip."

DULCIE (*starting*). Hobbledehoy!

ALGY. Don't say you backed him, Miss Primrose!

DULCIE. No, I haven't backed him. (*Goes up to the window, annoyed.*)

ALGY. Neither have I. It's a foolish practice. Besides, Jazz Baby is giving away too much weight, Albert.

JOE. *Cave!* There's father coming across the park. Get out, Albert!

ALBERT. Yes, sir.

(ALBERT slips out of the door R.)

KATIE. You don't know of anything for to-morrow, Mr. Sprigge?

ALGY (*feeling DULCIE's eye upon him*). Nothing at all, I am afraid. The fact is—I—er—I wouldn't back horses, if I were you.

KATIE. But it's such fun!

ALGY (*enthusiastically*). Yes, isn't it! I mean—well, you shouldn't do it until you are twenty-one, you know. Besides, what would father say?

KATIE. Father? Why, he won't even let us go to the Race Week Ball.

ALGY. Oh, that's too bad! I wonder if I could persuade him to let me take you all.

KATIE. If only you could!

ALGY. Consider it settled!

KATIE. Miss Primrose, too?

ALGY. Rather!

JOE. Hush!

(KATIE pushes ALGY across L. MR. PURDIE appears at the window and enters. He looks anxiously at the clock, which chimes three.)

MR. PURDIE. That clock is five minutes slow. (*He goes to the clock and adjusts it.*) Miss Primrose, I will have my letters for signature, please.

(ALGY opens the door for DULCIE, who goes out door L. Turning from the clock, with heavy geniality.)

I observe you have been making the acquaintance of my son and daughter, Mr. Sprigge. Both are at the awkward age; but their minds are receptive. Please remember that. They are very quick at—picking things up.

ALGY. So I have already discovered, Mr. Purdie.

MR. PURDIE. Still, they have no right in this room at this hour. (To JOE and KATIE.) Take Mr. Sprigge and show him the Market Cross, and the crypt of the old Guildhall. Then bring him back to tea.

KATIE. Yes, father. (*Makes a face of disgust at JOE.*)

MR. PURDIE (to ALGY). You will forgive me, but I have much to engross me at present.

(*Telephone bell rings.*)

ALGY. I rather thought you had. (*He turns to go.*)

MR. PURDIE (*taking the receiver*). Well? (*He listens.*) It is for you, Mr. Sprigge. It appears to be Sir Reginald Toothill. Where is he?

ALGY. I expect he's speaking from "The George." He went down there to bring up the luggage. (*He takes the receiver.*) Thank you—Hallo! Toots! That you? Oh, have you heard the result of the race already?

(JOE and KATIE nudge one another. MR. PURDIE is much agitated.)

What was the price, do you know? Twenties! My word! I wish I'd been on. Were you?—no, of course you wouldn't be. What were second and third?

MR. PURDIE (*suddenly realizing the presence of his son and daughter*). Joe! Katie! Leave the room!

(JOE and KATIE go out hurriedly R. ALGY hangs up the receiver.)

ALGY. Well, that's that. (*Rises.*)

MR. PURDIE (*nervously*). Mr. Sprigge, was that a betting transaction that you were discussing?

ALGY. Yes, the result of the three o'clock race at Windsor. Sir Reginald has just got it over the telephone straight from the course.

MR. PURDIE. Actually, over the public telephone! Scandalous! What was the name of the successful animal?

ALGY. Hobbledehoy. (*He goes up R.*)

MR. PURDIE. Hobbledehoy? Mr. Sprigge (*with a gulp*), what does Twenties mean?

ALGY. The horse started at odds of twenty to one against, which means that anyone betting one pound upon the result would win twenty pounds.

MR. PURDIE (*sitting at his table and looking straight before him*). Supposing a person were reckless enough to hazard—ten pounds!

ALGY (*up stage, smiling—he begins to understand now*). He would win two hundred.

(Mr. PURDIE rises to his feet with a startled exclamation.)

Anything wrong ?

MR. PURDIE. I am agitated at the very idea !

ALGY. Well, I'll leave you to your afternoon's work.

MR. PURDIE. No, no, I am too upset. I feel that I must walk about. I need exercise. I will take you to the crypt myself. *(Puts on his hat again.)*

ALGY. That'll be splendid !

(They go to the window.)

(Enter BATES by window.)

BATES. I beg your pardon, sir, I was just going to telephone about your luggage.

ALGY. That's all right. *(Goes out of window.)*

BATES *(to PURDIE)*. Could I speak to you, sir ?

MR. PURDIE. What is it, Bates ?

BATES *(earnestly)*. Sir,—those two young gentlemen—particularly the one outside the window there. Forgive the liberty, sir, but are you quite wise in admitting them to a household such as this ?

MR. PURDIE. You know them ?

BATES. No, sir, but I've just unpacked one of their bags. *(Indicating ALGY again.)* That one's !

MR. PURDIE. Well ?

BATES. Sir, it contained a pair of race-glasses, a notebook—apparently a record of bets, sir—and a silver flask full of some alcoholic beverage. What shall we do ?

MR. PURDIE. Do ?

BATES. Yes, sir. These two young gentlemen in this household—backing horses, sir ! Think of the atmosphere they will create ! I couldn't breathe it ! I hardly think I can remain in your service—

MR. PURDIE. Bates, I applaud your scruples—

BATES. I thank you, sir.

MR. PURDIE. But we—er—must not be hasty. We must not judge too readily. I flatter myself that I am a man of broad views—

BATES. I have always noted that fact, sir.

MR. PURDIE. If our neighbour errs, must we expel him from our midst ?

BATES. Yes, sir.

MR. PURDIE. No, Bates. Let us rather educate him—cultivate him ! And who knows ? Perhaps one day we shall reap a substantial reward ! Bread upon the waters, Bates ; bread upon—
(Going to window.)

BATES. Sir, trouble will come of this—for some of us.

MR. PURDIE. Nonsense! I shall be back to tea at five o'clock precisely. (MR. PURDIE *goes out*. BATES *watches him out of sight, shaking his head despondently.*)

BATES. I don't like it. I don't like it! (*He takes up the telephone.*) Newstead, five four. (*He lays down the receiver and tidies MR. PURDIE'S table, then takes up receiver.*) Is that "The Ugly Duckling"? That you, Sam, old feller? Bert speaking. What won the three o'clock at Windsor? Damn!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same ; ten days later.*

The clock marks a quarter past twelve. It is warm and sunny, and the windows on to the terrace stand open. The gas stove has been removed, and a coal fire is burning.

It is the first day of the Races. Through the windows can be heard the noise of the crowd assembling. One of the roads leading to the Course passes close to the house. The sound of traffic going past is quite clear. Occasionally people can be heard singing in chorus or shouting. The distant music of a steam merry-go-round is audible.

JANE and TWEENY are out on the terrace, eagerly pointing out the sights to one another. JOE and KATIE are up in the gallery, looking out of the window L. below. ALBERT is at the half-open door R., gazing down the passage, obviously on sentry duty.

TWEENY (*pointing*). Oh, Jane, look at that lovely yeller car, passing by that sharrybang, now!

(The sound of a Klaxon horn is heard.)

JANE. Yes, and a nice dust they're kicking up, I don't think! Look at that man with the race-cards, hanging on to the side. There's sauce for you! I wonder one of the gentlemen in the car don't push him off.

TWEENY. 'E'll be run over by that Ford if they do.

JANE. Don't be silly! Fords can't hurt anybody. (*More noise.*)

(They continue pointing and talking. JOE leaves his window and comes to the edge of the gallery.)

JOE. Everything all right, Albert?

ALBERT. Yes, sir; I can see right down the passage from 'ere. 'E's still in his pantry.

KATIE (*peering through field-glasses*). Joe, come and look how the Grand Stand's filling up.

JOE (*going to her and taking the glasses from her*). My word, yes! How clear! Whose glasses are these?

KATIE (*cooly*). Sir Reginald pressed them upon me. (*Taking them from JOE.*) Do you hear that merry-go-round? (*Singing.*) La-la-la!

(*Another char-à-banc goes past, containing people singing a roaring chorus. KATIE waves to them. DULCIE enters L. ALBERT sees her, and promptly conceals himself by going out R. and closing the door. JANE and TWEENY disappear. DULCIE stops at the foot of the staircase. She is looking up at KATIE and JOE.*)

DULCIE. Katie!

KATIE (*coming to the edge of the gallery*). Hallo, Dulcie! (*She giggles nervously.*) That you?

DULCIE. I suppose you know this room is strictly out of bounds, and your father may walk into it at any moment?

KATIE. Oh, no, he won't, dearie. We're a-watchin' of him!

DULCIE. You can see him?

KATIE. Rather! Joe, what's Dad doing just now?

JOE. He's having an argument with somebody in the crowd.

KATIE. You surprise me!

(*Another char-à-banc passes, with much noise. JOE roars with laughter; so does KATIE.*)

DULCIE. What's happened?

JOE. A girl in that char-à-banc kicked Dad's hat off! Oh, Miss Primrose, you would have laughed!

DULCIE. You're a pair of disgraces, and I hope you'll get caught!

KATIE. No, you don't, really. You're too good a sport.

JOE. Talking of sport, it's going to be a bit of a job getting our money on to-day.

DULCIE. Who puts your money on?

JOE. Albert; but we can't get out of the house, even, with Bates nosing about.

DULCIE (*scornfully*). I wonder you don't ask Mr. Sprigge: it's quite in his line.

JOE. That's a topping idea! And here he is!

(*Enter ALGY and TOOTHILL, in complete racing outfit L., at the head of the staircase.*)

ALGY. Well, well, well, here we are, all agog for the Sport of Kings!

JOE. You lucky brutes!

TOOTHILL (*gloomily*). Never call a man lucky until after the last race.

ALGY (*coming down the staircase*). Good morning, Miss Primrose!

DULCIE (*going L., towards her door*). Good morning.

ALGY. Must you leave us?

DULCIE (*coldly*). I needn't, but I will. (*Exits.*)

TOOTHILL (to ALGY). That's one in the eyeball for you, my lad.

KATIE (*running down the stair after ALGY*). Algy, dear, have you heard of anything? Do you know anything?

ALGY. I don't think I know anything that you don't know, Katie.

(KATIE produces a folded page of the "Daily Mirror" from the top of her stocking and consults it.)

KATIE. Is Orange Girl any good?

ALGY. A lemon, my dear—a lemon!

KATIE. What about Methuselah?

ALGY. Methuselah? For the Newstead Cup? No, my child. For the Golder's Green Urn, perhaps!

KATIE. What about Will Shakespeare?

TOOTHILL. He's dead. They're all dead. I'm not feeling very well myself. (*Sits sofa.*)

ALGY. Never mind about backing losers for a minute. Listen to me. (*To KATIE.*) Cinderella, do you want to go to the Ball to-night?

KATIE. Oh, yes, dear Fairy Godfather!

ALGY. Well, you shall. We'll all go. Even Toots shall go.

KATIE. But how can we get away with it?

ALGY. It's a fancy dress ball. We'll go disguised.

KATIE. Where can we get our disguises?

ALGY. I have attended to that. I'm going down to the station now, to see if they've arrived.

KATIE. Oh, Algy!

(KATIE embraces ALGY, to the annoyance of TOOTHILL. The door R. bursts open, and ALBERT appears.)

ALBERT (to ALGY). Sir, sir, he's a-coming! Mr. Bates is a-coming!

(ALBERT rushes out of the window and disappears.)

KATIE (*agitated*). Oy! Oy! (*She rushes up the staircase.*)
Cave, Joe! Bates!

TOOTHILL. Do not be alarmed. I will protect you from insult.

ALGY (*slapping his chest*). Who's afraid?

(Enter BATES, R. ALGY and TOOTHILL are at the foot of the stair. KATIE and JOE are on the staircase above them. On seeing them BATES looks deeply distressed, and advances towards the stair. TOOTHILL steps in front of him aggressively.)

ALGY. Over Sir Reginald's dead body, Bates!

TOOTHILL. Dry up, Algy! Bates, I am responsible for Miss Purdie's presence here.

KATIE (*modestly*). Oh, Sir Reginald!

BATES. I have my orders, sir. The library is out of bounds for this young lady and gentleman during the Races. I'm afraid I must report this.

KATIE. Sneak!

BATES (*reproachfully*). My duty, Miss Katie! (*To ALGY.*) A 'amper has just arrived for you, sir, from London.

ALGY. A 'amper?

BATES. A namper, sir! A large basket.

ALGY. Who sent it?

BATES. A person of the name of Clarkson, sir. (*Offering invoice.*) Will you kindly sign for it? There is seven-and-sixpence to pay.

TOOTHILL (*to KATIE*). It's the costumes for to-night.

KATIE. Sh-sh——!

ALGY (*handing back the invoice*). Lend me ten shillings, Toots.

TOOTHILL. What?

ALGY. Lend me ten shillings.

TOOTHILL (*handing the note*). Remember about this one.

ALGY. Certainly. You now owe me one hundred and ninety-nine pounds, ten shillings. Thank you, Bates. Give the man this. (*He gives BATES a ten-shilling note.*) Tell him he can keep the change.

BATES. Very good, sir. (*Exits.*)

ALGY. I bet you half a crown he doesn't tell him!

KATIE. Is it really our costumes?

ALGY. Yes.

KATIE. For all of us?

ALGY. Yes, all of us.

KATIE. For Miss Primrose too?

ALGY. Most certainly for Miss Primrose too.

KATIE. Oh, *please* go and fetch them!

ALGY. Righto! Come on, Toots!

TOOTHILL. I'm not a coolie!

KATIE. Go on! Hurry!

TOOTHILL. Oh, sorry!

(TOOTHILL and ALGY go out. JOE has now left his window altogether; both are down stage.)

KATIE. Oh, I wonder what he's got for us to wear! Are you excited, Joe? (*Jumps on to the sofa.*)

JOE. How are we going to get there? Getting out of this house at night is like getting out of Wormwood Scrubs.

KATIE. Algy will arrange it. Algy will arrange everything. Oh, I'm so thrilled! Excuse me if I dance!

(*She begins to dance round the stage, singing to the distant music of the merry-go-round. MR. PURDIE appears in the window.*)

(KATIE still dancing and singing.) Yes, sir, that's my baby! (*She comes face to face with her father.*) Ough!

(PURDIE brushes past her and sits at his desk.)

(KATIE and JOE stand side by side.)

MR. PURDIE. What is the meaning of this? You know my orders.

KATIE. Yes, father dear. We're very, very sorry.

JOE. Awfully sorry, father.

MR. PURDIE. My object in forbidding you this room was to preserve your innocence from the sights and sounds out there: yet you——

(Suddenly another char-à-banc goes past outside, with a tremendous noise of a roaring chorus and the screech of a Klaxon horn. PURDIE strides angrily out on to the terrace and stands glaring. Simultaneously the door R. opens, and ALGY and TOOTHILL enter boisterously, with a large wicker dress basket. JOE and KATIE point frantically to their father. ALGY and TOOTHILL promptly wheel round again and tiptoe out. The noise outside subsides. PURDIE turns and comes down. He goes R., and rings the bell R. There is a pause. PURDIE goes to his desk and examines his letters. Some of these are very gaudily coloured. He pushes them away rather furtively under some blotting-paper. JOE and KATIE stand down L.)

KATIE (*in a whisper to JOE*). Are we going to be drawn or quartered?

JOE. He's going to tick off Bates first.

(Enter BATES, R.)

BATES. You rang, sir?

MR. PURDIE. I did. Why are Mr. Joe and Miss Katie in this room?

BATES. Responsibility for their presence, sir, has been assumed by Sir Reginald Toothill.

MR. PURDIE. Sir Reginald has no right to make any such assumption. (*He rings the bell communicating with DULCIE's room.*) Bates, you have to a certain extent forfeited my confidence.

BATES. I am distressed to hear it, sir.

(Enter DULCIE. *She goes to her usual place on PURDIE's L. As she passes JOE and KATIE, KATIE nudges her and makes a face. DULCIE takes no notice.*)

MR. PURDIE. Miss Primrose, let me repeat to you the warning which I have just been compelled to reiterate—and that is, that no one must enter this room, or the garden on this side of the house, for the rest of the day.

DULCIE. Am I to turn people out if they do come in, Mr. Purdie ?

MR. PURDIE. No. Bates will attend to that. Your duty is to support Bates and, if necessary, advise him of the presence of trespassers.

(JOE and KATIE are much amused.)

DULCIE. Do you really think it is necessary ?

MR. PURDIE. I do. The road outside this house is crowded with undesirable vehicles and disreputable pedestrians. I was there myself a few minutes ago, and I was actually accosted by a man posing as one possessed of prophetic powers. He offered me for a shilling a sealed envelope containing the name of the prospective winner of the race for the—er—Newstead Cup. Needless to say, I purchased it—

(There is a movement of surprise from everybody.)

—in order to hand it over to the police. (He produces an envelope.) Here it is.

JOE (eagerly). What does it say ?

KATIE (whispering). S-sh ! Idiot !

MR. PURDIE. I have not opened it ; but I shall do so now, in order to make sure that I have not been hoaxed with an empty envelope. (He opens the envelope and takes out a slip of paper.) This sheet contains a single word—or rather, two words : “ Kitchen Nuts ” !

BATES (contemptuously). Pah ! (He recovers himself.)

MR. PURDIE (looking up). What does that interjection imply, Bates ?

BATES. Pain, sir ; pain at such effrontery !

MR. PURDIE. Your sentiments are creditable. But—(thoughtfully)—er—is there such a horse as Kitchen Nuts ?

KATIE. Rather ; and it's a jolly fine horse.

JOE (whispering). Sh-h !

MR. PURDIE (startled, to KATIE). How do you know ?

KATIE. I s-saw a pho-photograph of it in “ The Daily Mirror ” yesterday.

MR. PURDIE (to DULCIE). Illustrated journals will be excluded from this household in future.

DULCIE. Yes, Mr. Purdie. (Makes a note.)

MR. PURDIE. I merely mention this episode to emphasize the dangers which lie in wait for all of us at the very doors of this house to-day. (Rises—to JOE and KATIE.) Your punishment must be a matter of consideration. I am going out. Bates, look round the garden and grounds, in case of trespassers.

(BATES bows respectfully and goes out B. PURDIE goes up to the window.)

(To JOE and KATIE.) To your rooms, instantly! I shall take a short walk in the town.

(PURDIE goes out by the window. JOE and KATIE go to exit L., but return.)

JOE and KATIE. Ha!

KATIE. Miss Primrose, do you think Kitchen Nuts is any good?

DULCIE. Don't drag me into this, Katie. You heard what Mr. Purdie said. What about going to your rooms? Am I to carry you there?

KATIE. Oh, no, Dulcie! You must ring for Bates and tell him to do it.

JOE (*in his father's voice*). Your duty is to support Bates and, if necessary, to advise him!

(*They both laugh. KATIE runs to DULCIE and kisses her.*)

KATIE. Now look here, Dulcie, if you'll only let us stay here for a few minutes longer, we promise faithfully to clear out, and you shan't see us again all day. Please!

DULCIE. You're a wicked child. Why do you want to stay?

KATIE (*with assumed coyness*). I am expecting to meet two gentlemen friends here.

DULCIE. Mr. Sprigge——?

KATIE. Yes—and *my* admirer!

JOE. Oh!

KATIE. They want to meet you, too.

DULCIE (*rising and going L.*). No, thank you.

KATIE. But they've a lovely surprise for you.

DULCIE. I think we're having all the surprises we can do with at present.

(*The door opens R. and ALGY puts his head in.*)

ALGY. Pardon the furtive question, but is the coast clear?

(*On seeing ALGY, DULCIE goes out L.*)

JOE. Yes, all clear. Dad has just gone out for a walk.

ALGY. Where?

KATIE. To nag the police. We can open the basket here now.

ALGY. Good. (*Calling.*) Mr. Toots—forward!

(TOOTHILL staggers in with the basket on his shoulder. He sets it down C.)

Our Mr. Toots will now submit costumes for approval. Hallo! Where's Miss Primrose?

KATIE. She was here a minute ago. I'll fetch her.

ALGY. Tell her we've got a corking frock for her.

KATIE. Righto.

(KATIE goes out L. TOOTHILL produces from the basket a very dingy check suit and a broken bowler hat, once white.)

JOE. Whose is that, Toots ?

TOOTHILL. Mine.

ALGY. Costume of race-course tout, early twentieth century. To be worn by our Mr. Toots. I said his ordinary clothes would do, but he would go and order some more.

TOOTHILL (*annoyed*). Look here, Algy, don't go and crab everything I do, like that. I'm not going as a tout.

ALGY. Sorry, old comrade. What are you going as ?

TOOTHILL. As a well-known race-course character—Nimble Nip, the Lad Who Knows. (*Starts.*) "Lydies and Gentlemen, as I was travelling down in the Club train this morning——"

ALGY (*hurriedly*). That's quite enough from you.

(TOOTHILL hands out a pair of striped trousers and a dingy evening coat, with banjo, etc.)

JOE. What am I to be ?

ALGY. We're going as a party of race-course types. After Toots, reading from left to right, we begin with Uncle Ebony, the well-known banjoist and raconteur, with instrument complete. There, my lad, put those on, and Heaven help the girls !

(*Enter KATIE.*)

Well ?

KATIE. She won't come. She sends her compliments and says she will have nothing to do with such an expedition.

ALGY (*rurfully*). Registered address : "*Dulcie et decorum*" ! Never mind, I'll persuade her later on.

KATIE. Which are my things, please ?

ALGY. The first idea was to make you a Salvation Lassie, come to convert Toots : thereby combining an attractive costume with a long-delayed public service. On second thoughts, Pierrette, with tambourine, to help Uncle Ebony ! There you are !

(TOOTHILL, *much disappointed*, pulls out a pair of dark blue trousers.)

No, that's the wrong kit, old son. There, Katie !

KATIE (*taking the dress*). Oh, how lovely ! What is Miss Primrose's costume ?

ALGY. She is to be a gipsy, and tell fortunes. (*Taking the garments from TOOTHILL.*) Dress—shawl—— !

(ALGY lays them on a chair down L., below the door. Bus. with JOE, who is sitting L. of desk, strumming on banjo.)

KATIE. What are you going to be ?

ALGY. Ah, that's a secret! But I'm going to be something you see on every race-course.

KATIE. Toots, what *does* one see on every race-course?

TOOTHILL (*sulkily*). Banana skins.

JOE. But how are we going to get to the ball?

ALGY. I have arranged for a car to be waiting round the corner, just after father's bed-time.

KATIE. Algy, you're marvellous! I'm going to try my things on now.

JOE. Good idea! (*Picks up bundle.*) So am I.

TOOTHILL. I say, you promised to come for a walk with me, to a place where you could see the races.

KATIE. Joe and I are warned off the turf.

JOE. We'd be spotted to a certainty if we went on the course, or anywhere near it.

ALGY (*suddenly*). Stop! I've got an idea. (*Indicating the costumes.*) Katie—Pierrette, with mask! Joe—nigger minstrel, with black face! Why not dress up now, and take a trial trip for to-night on the Course this afternoon? What about it?

JOE. By Jove!

KATIE. What a heavenly idea! Come on, Joe! (*She runs towards the stairs, then stops.*) But—why shouldn't we all four dress up and go out?

ALGY. Not Toots, or I.

TOOTHILL. Why not?

ALGY. Well, there might be difficulties about getting Toots, as Nimble Nip, into the Members' Enclosure. It's not too easy in the ordinary way.

TOOTHILL. I don't care. I'll jolly well stay outside on the course with Ka—these two.

ALGY. Very well, my gallant lad, you shall! Now, all run away and try on your things. Come back when you're ready.

JOE. Righto!

KATIE. Bless you, Algy dear!

(*They run upstairs together. KATIE kisses her hand to ALGY. ALGY goes up to the window, looks out, and comes down.*)

ALGY. The traffic is dying away a bit now: it's almost time for the first race.

TOOTHILL. I say, I've been thinking—what about my lunch? I can't go into a Club tent with these things on.

ALGY (L.). You should have thought about that sooner, my lad. My advice to you is to have something now. Go and see if there is anything on the dining-room sideboard.

TOOTHILL. I might meet Bates.

ALGY (*grinning*). I don't think you need worry about Bates. Take that basket away. Let us be tidy, for Gawd's sake.

TOOTHILL. Oh, go to blazes!

ALGY. And bring me a cooling drink, will you?

TOOTHILL (*taking the basket and going out with it*). Curse you!

(*Left alone, ALGY stands gazing at DULCIE'S door L., then after a glance out of the window and up the stair, he goes to the desk and sits on MR. PURDIE'S chair and draws the dictaphone to him. There is a wax cylinder already in place.*)

ALGY. My dear Miss Primrose—or may I call you Grand-mother? Ha! H'm! (*He releases the button on the mouthpiece, sits back and considers. Then he resumes.*) When we first met, ten days ago, I told you I had a question to ask you. That question is still unasked. Doubtless you are surprised. Why this delay? (*Pause.*) Yes—why this delay? Well, the fact is, you can't stand the sight of me; at any rate, you haven't let me come within speaking distance of you for a week. Hence this method of approach—through our old friend Dick! Of course you hate people racing, and I know why. I know the circumstances of your—circumstances. Let me say that you have my deep sympathy in your misfortunes, and my profound admiration for the courage with which you have faced them. (*To himself.*) Come, that's better!

(*JOE appears at the top of the stair.*)

JOE. I say, Algy!

ALGY (*starting*). Oh, go to blazes! Oh, it's you, Joe. Sorry!

JOE. I say, if you see Albert hanging about on the terrace, you might give me a whistle, will you?

ALGY. Whistle? I'll give you a saxophone if you'll only go away!

JOE. Thanks!

(*JOE disappears again.*)

ALGY (*resuming into the dictaphone*). But I can wait no longer. The fact is—well, I've got to tell you. (*He has lost self-consciousness now and is leaning forward and speaking really sincerely.*) Please listen to me for a moment. I'm a bad starter, but I can stay like anything. Dulcie, will you marry me—become my owner—let me carry your colours for life? I'll give up racing to please you, and we'll buy this house back. Oh, my dear, dear—

(*DULCIE enters L. ALGY rises, smiling awkwardly.*)

Miss Primrose!

DULCIE (*also a little taken aback*). Hallo! What are you trying to do? Write to your grandmother again?

ALGY. Not quite. The fact is, I have a rather important speech to make—shortly. (*Taking off cylinder.*)

DULCIE. Is it a public speech?

ALGY. Well, admission will be by invitation only.

DULCIE. Is it funny?

ALGY (*smiling feebly*). That depends on how the audience takes it. I thought it would be a good plan to run it through this machine and see how it sounded, and so forth. You'd be surprised if you knew the amount of brain work tucked away inside this little fellow. (*Awkwardly*.) I wonder—would you, next time you are alone and have nothing better to do, put him through the mangle and have a listen at him, and tell me if you think he's any good? (*Thrusting the cylinder impulsively into her hand*.) I should be awfully obliged if you would.

DULCIE (*rather deliberately*). I am not sure that I shall.

ALGY. Why not?

DULCIE. Mr. Sprigge, I think it's time you and I came to an understanding.

ALGY (*pleased*). That's exactly what I've been thinking for ten days!

DULCIE. I must talk to you; and it isn't going to be very pleasant.

ALGY. Bless my soul, what's the matter?

DULCIE. Mr. Sprigge, how would you describe your attitude towards me while you've been in this house?

ALGY. Your constant shadow.

DULCIE. Yes. You have followed me about; you have forced your company on me; you have talked to me in a silly, extravagant way. Why?

ALGY. Why? (*Indicating the cylinder*.) Waxen Willie will tell you.

DULCIE. I'll tell you myself. Because it amuses you, and because you consider I am not in a position to resent it. That's why. And I want to tell you here and now that I won't stand it. So there!

(*She turns and goes up.*)

ALGY. But, my dear little girl—

DULCIE (*turning sharply round on him*). That's just it! "Your dear little girl"—to me! Don't you see you can't say that?

(*Goes down L. quickly.*)

ALGY. Don't be silly! I like saying it. I mean it.

DULCIE. Then go and say it to some one in your own walk of life. She might regard it as a compliment. I regard it as an insult.

ALGY. "Walk of life," indeed! I happen to know—(*pointing to the cylinder*)—so does William there: he knows!

DULCIE (*suddenly noticing the gipsy costume*). What's this?

ALGY. That's your costume for the Ball to-night.

DULCIE. My costume? (*Coming down to him indignantly.*) You mean to say you dared?

ALGY. Oh, I'm not frightened of old man Purdie. Besides, he won't find out.

DULCIE. Don't pretend! (*Face to face with him.*) You know that's not what I mean. How dare you get that dress for me, without so much as by your leave? How dare you take it for granted that I would accept your invitation?

ALGY. I don't quite understand. My idea was that we should all go, and have a lot of fun.

DULCIE. Did you order costumes for everybody?

ALGY. Yes. They are trying them on now.

DULCIE. Did you invite the others to your party before you ordered their costumes, or after?

ALGY. Before.

DULCIE. There!

ALGY. But my whole idea in getting up the party was to have you in it.

DULCIE. Then why didn't you invite me sooner?

ALGY. But you say you wouldn't have come, anyhow.

DULCIE. That has nothing whatever to do with it.

(*ALGY gives a deep groan; but decides to try again.*)

ALGY. Now, let me tell you—

DULCIE. I don't want to be told. I know already.

ALGY. I thought since you were going to be the hardest to persuade, that the best plan would be to organize the party first, and then—sweep you along with us, so to speak, in the general wave of enthusiasm.

DULCIE. No. I was the Cinderella—the menial! I would come when I was whistled for—and jump at the chance! There's your costume!

(*Throwing it to him and going L.*)

ALGY. Thank you very much.

DULCIE (*pausing at the door, with great dignity*). I think that's all I have to say.

ALGY. Oh, no! Surely not!

DULCIE. I hope I have made the position clear?

ALGY. Positively luminous.

DULCIE. And I hope I haven't hurt you feelings?

ALGY. What an idea!

DULCIE (*at door*). Is there anything you would like to say?

ALGY (*at desk*). Yes. Can I have that cylinder back?

DULCIE. Aren't you going to deliver that speech after all?

(*She gives cylinder to him. ALGY throws it into the waste-paper basket.*)

ALGY. If I do, it will be to another audience! (*For a moment they gaze at one another defiantly.*) I am sorry I have insulted you.

DULCIE. I am glad you admit it!

(DULCIE goes out.)

(ALGY makes a grimace, and groans. He rolls up the costume and throws it under the chair down L. Enter TOOTHILL with a salver containing two cocktails.)

TOOTHILL (*comparatively cheerful*). Enter Big White Chief, with firewater! Here's yours.

ALGY (*taking the larger cocktail*). Thanks. I need it. (*Drinks; then takes the other, and drinks.*)

TOOTHILL. I say, that's mine!

ALGY (*putting down the empty glass on the tray*). Not now!

(TOOTHILL turns away angrily and puts down the salver R.)

You'd better run and dress up. Mustn't keep Miss Katie waiting, you know.

TOOTHILL (*huffily*). That, after all, is entirely my affair. Hallo, who's that?

(ALBERT appears at the window, peeping in. He wears a country-man's smock frock over his page's livery, and a hat much too large for him.)

ALGY. It's Albert. He appears to be going to a party, too. Come in, Albert.

ALBERT. Is Mr. Joe about, sir?

ALGY. I think so.

ALBERT. I've come to get some money and betting slips from 'im, sir, before Mr. Bates comes back. 'E's in the kitching garden.

(ALGY goes to the foot of the stairs and whistles.)

(JOE replies, off, much out of tune.)

ALGY (*to ALBERT*). So these are the clothes you go racing in, Albert?

ALBERT. I borrowed them from my brother, sir. They're a disguise.

ALGY. You're right there, Albert; and you're quite in the movement. Look! (*He points to the head of the stair.*)

(JOE appears, dressed as "Uncle Ebony," except that his face is white.)

Joe, your chartered accountant has called.

JOE (*coming down*). Is that you, Albert?

ALBERT. Yes, sir. I'll go and put the money on now, if you've got it.

(ALGY and TOOTHILL go to the door, R. ALGY turns.)

ALGY. I say, Joe—I'd put some more black on my face, if I were you.

JOE. I haven't put any on yet.

ALGY. Oh, sorry!

(ALGY and TOOTHILL go out R.)

JOE. Here you are, Albert. (*Handing slips.*) Orange Girl each way, two o'clock; Shakespeare each way, two-thirty; Kitchen Nuts to win only, three o'clock. Here's the money. Nip along, and don't get caught. (*Pointing R.*) You've collected everybody else's slips, I suppose?

ALBERT. Yes, sir. (*Goes to window.*) Look out, 'ere's Mr. Bates!

(ALBERT runs out R. JOE hurries upstairs and disappears. BATES appears in the window; he looks about him cautiously; then comes to the tables and takes up telephone.)

BATES. Newstead, five-four. (*He lays down telephone receiver to put the dictaphone back in place; then picks it up again.*) Hallo! That the "Ugly Duckling"? That you, Sam? Morning! Bert speaking. Well, what do you know? What? Going to be a bookmakers' day, is it? Keep off of everything—so that's the office, eh? Well, perhaps you're right! Eh? Why, certainly, old man. Shall we say at the "Duckling," to-morrow night? That'll suit. We'll meet and have a couple—

(*The door opens R. and MR. PURDIE appears, obviously preoccupied. He catches sight of BATES and starts. In his hand are a couple of newspapers. He hastily thrusts them under his coat. He enters, closes the door with a slight bang. BATES does not move, but his voice and manner immediately change.*)

You can't hear me? (*Louder.*) The ducklings you sent for to-morrow night won't suit. We'll have a couple with more meat on, please. (*He turns and sees MR. PURDIE.*) I beg your pardon, sir. (*Hanging up the receiver.*) I took the liberty of telephoning to the poulterer on behalf of Cook.

MR. PURDIE. Quite in order, quite in order!

BATES. Will there be anything further, sir?

MR. PURDIE. Yes. Make up that fire. The weather is chilly.

BATES. Chilly, sir? It seems to me particularly warm and sunny.

MR. PURDIE (*mopping his brow*). There is an east wind.

BATES. To be sure, sir. (*He goes to the fire.*)

(MR. PURDIE furtively produces from his coat the two newspapers, which are of the highly-coloured Racing Special brand, and thrusts them under the blotter. He pulls a notebook out of his pocket and

consults it: then pulls the telephone towards him. Looks at the clock. He is obviously waiting for BATES to go. BATES, having made up the fire, crosses R., behind him.)

Will that be all, sir?

MR. PURDIE. Yes. *(There is a distant roar from the Course. MR. PURDIE starts.)* What's that?

BATES *(goes up to window and down again)*. Possibly the horses going down to the post for the first race, sir.

MR. PURDIE. You seem very familiar with these matters!

BATES *(respectfully)*. One of the races must be the first, sir.

MR. PURDIE *(nervously)*. I suppose a great deal of money will change hands during the course of the next few minutes.

BATES *(shaking his head)*. I fear so, sir. Still, there is one saving grace about it, if I may say so. For everybody that loses a pound on these occasions there is somebody that wins one. The balance of nature is a wonderful thing, sir. Every cloud 'as a silver—

MR. PURDIE *(suddenly)*. Is that clock right?

BATES. On the slow side, I should say, sir.

MR. PURDIE *(feverishly)*. Leave me! I have much to do.

BATES. Very good, sir.

(After a long look over his shoulder at MR. PURDIE'S back, he goes out quietly upstairs.)

(Left alone, MR. PURDIE sits at his desk and consults the two newspapers. He jots down a name or two on a slip of paper. Then he takes up the telephone.)

MR. PURDIE *(in a low agitated voice)*. Gerrard two three four nine. *(Pause.)*

(He looks apprehensively round, then goes to fire and puts newspapers on, and returns to the telephone.)

(Very distinctly). Hallo! Hallo! Jazz Baby—Carnation each way. Puddleduck speaking. Puddleduck—Mr. Amos Purdie, you know. I want a carnation on Jazz Baby, each—What? Who are you? Co-operative Stores? Sorry you've been troubled!

(MR. PURDIE gives a sickly smile and eases his collar. He hangs up the receiver, then takes it off again.)

I want Gerrard two three four nine. You gave me a wrong number. I didn't ask for two three four five—I want two three four nine—ny-un! *(He lays down the receiver and tiptoes L., where he locks the door. Then returns, and takes up receiver.)* Hallo! *(Cautiously.)* Who is that, please? Ah—Maggie! This is Love-a-duck!

(BATES appears, coming furtively down stairs.)

I want a carnation on Jazz Baby, please—each way. Jazz Baby, each way. Have you noted that correctly? Now I want a rhododendron—

BATES (*with stunning clearness*). I wouldn't have nothing to do with Jazz Baby, sir. He's a stumer.

MR. PURDIE (*leaping to his feet and whirling round*). Bates! What does this mean?

BATES (*calmly*). It means, sir, that for the future I have got you where I want you; and about time, too! The combination in this house of psalm-singing and inferior victuals was getting on my nerves. Do you mind if I smoke? (*Lights a cigarette.*)

MR. PURDIE (*in a real towering rage*). You impostor! Get out of my house, before I send for the police!

BATES. Oh, come off the roof, Purdie. I'm surprised at you! Where's your sense of humour?

MR. PURDIE. Leave this house!

BATES. I'm not sure if I shall; I may stay on a bit. It depends entirely on the offer you're going to make me.

MR. PURDIE. Offer?

BATES. Yes, and you'll have to offer a good deal to square my conscience. My word, Purdie, you have been going of it! By the way, that was a bad error of yours, having that open grate put back. That was what started my suspicions: I knew then that you had either gone balmy or else got some evidence to destroy. (*Picks up PURDIE's list of selections.*)

(PURDIE, who is quite paralysed by this time, makes no attempt to prevent him. BATES glances over the list.)

Your selections for to-day? 'Struth! You must have been handing out your savings with a shovel of late, if this is a fair sample. Who do you think you are—Robinson Crœsus? I expect Martin Maggs has got your picture on his mantelpiece, with a sprig of mistletoe over it, and kisses it good night regular! (*Helps himself to a drink.*)

MR. PURDIE. You know Mr. Maggs?

BATES. Yes. Not in these days, when he has an office in the West End, with clean winders and a row of clerks wearing white spats; but in the old times, when he was calling the odds on every course in England, and I was booking bets for Old Peter Squance, close by. (*With sudden reminiscent enthusiasm.*) Oh, those were days—those were days! Gawd, how I miss 'em, sometimes!

MR. PURDIE. Peter what?

BATES. Peter Squance. A bookmaker! Panama Pete, of Oldham. He wore a panama hat all the year round. I used to be his clerk once.

MR. PURDIE. Is the clerk the person one sees standing beside the bookmaker and writing things down?

BATES. Naughty boy ! You've been peeping through the fence !

MR. PURDIE. You have been a bookmaker's clerk ?

BATES. And other things. I've seen a lot more of life than you, Purdie.

MR. PURDIE. Bates——

BATES. Sir to you !

MR. PURDIE. I feel inclined to take you into my confidence.

BATES. You'd better.

MR. PURDIE (*crosses L. and down to chair L. of desk*). I have always flattered myself on being a man of broad views—— (*With a return of his old sanctimonious manner.*)

BATES. Yes ; and I dare say a giraffe always flatters itself on being an animal with a short neck.

MR. PURDIE. During the past few weeks, in a purely experimental way, I have been investigating the question of—er—turf speculation.

BATES. What has it cost you ?

MR. PURDIE (*evasively*). Experience is always costly.

BATES. It's as bad as that, is it ? Better make a clean breast of it.

MR. PURDIE. Do you know Mr. Joseph Pepper, of Upper Tooting ? Mr. Alfred Salter, of the principal Clubs, or Red Hot Reginald, of Wandsworth ?

BATES. I know them all. What's Joe Pepper's stuff like, these days ?

MR. PURDIE. I should describe him as more sanguine than reliable. But the worst of these experts is that they so seldom agree.

BATES. Pepper and Salter ought to : they're the same man.

MR. PURDIE. Ah ! Pepper ? Salter ? But this is barefaced fraud.

BATES. Yes. And anybody but a mug would have seen it for himself. Now, tell me how much money you have lost since you went in off the deep end.

MR. PURDIE (*evasively*). I started well, but since then——

BATES. What was your first winner ?

MR. PURDIE (*rises*). Hobbledehoy.

BATES. Windsor—eh ? For how much ?

MR. PURDIE. Rhododendron—ten pounds.

BATES. Each way ?

MR. PURDIE. Er—no. I have only recently become acquainted with the significance of that expression. At first I thought it meant backing a horse both to win and to lose, which seemed to me a prudent course to pursue. But the belief involved me in certain losses.

BATES (*crosses to him*). How much are you shy ?

MR. PURDIE. Shy ?

BATES (*patiently*). What is the total debit balance ?

MR. PURDIE. Four thousand pounds.

BATES. Purdie, I'm downright ashamed of you! Four thousand pounds in ten days!

(Suddenly BATES comes across to PURDIE and puts a hand on his shoulder. PURDIE is so crushed that he hardly notices.)

Now, look here, old feller, I'm not a bad sort, and I never take advantage of people that can't really defend themselves. Here's my advice. Cut this racing bug out of your system and forget it!

MR. PURDIE *(breaking out almost hysterically)*. Forget it! Have you ever lost four thousand pounds?

BATES. I never had it to lose. If I had, I'd have got more fun for my money than you have, Purdie.

MR. PURDIE. Four thousand pounds! Eighty thousand shillings! *(Quite carried away.)* Nine hundred and sixty thousand pence!

BATES. Yes. Nearly four million farthings. Don't work it out in francs, or you'll go right off your burner!

MR. PURDIE *(frantically)*. Four thousand pounds! I will not lose money by the sin of betting and gambling. I must get it back—at any cost! Bates, I implore you. Bates, I humble myself before you. Give me a winner! Give me a snip! Bates, if you will save me this time, I will overlook your previous record! I will double your wages!

BATES *(shaking him off)*. Oh, shut up! And let me think.

MR. PURDIE. I don't think I shall feel inclined ever to put rhododendrons on a horse again. *(Sinks on to a chair, c.)*

(BATES goes up to the window. He stands there for a moment, listening to the distant crowd; then he comes down with the air of a man who has made up his mind about something.)

BATES. Do you notice anything funny about that crowd out there?

MR. PURDIE. They are extremely noisy and obtrusive.

BATES. That's just what they're not. Listen! They're quiet; they're dead quiet. Why?

MR. PURDIE. I have no idea.

BATES. Because they're losing their money. It's only when the British public is winning that it makes a Hallelujah Chorus about it. Did you hear the finish of the first race just now?

MR. PURDIE. No.

BATES. Of course you didn't. Neither did I, although I was listening for it. Neither did anybody. And why? Because the favourite wasn't in the first three—and he was an odds-on favourite, too! That confirms something I just heard. To-day's going to be a bookmakers' day, and not a backers' day.

MR. PURDIE. I don't think I can bear any more. *(Groans.)*

BATES. There's going to be a lot of favourites taking the count this afternoon.

(MR. PURDIE *groans again*.)

Now, Purdie, tell me something. What wouldn't you do to get your money back?

MR. PURDIE. I am prepared to go to almost any extreme of personal exertion and discomfort.

BATES. Are you prepared to be thrown in a pond?

MR. PURDIE. Certainly—in moderation.

BATES. Good! Well, listen. I said to you just now that all the money that's lost on the course to-day by somebody *must* be won by somebody else.

MR. PURDIE. Yes, yes? For each loser there must be a corresponding winner.

BATES. And who are going to be the winners to-day?

MR. PURDIE. I don't know: I wish I did.

BATES. The bookmakers, and not the public! Now do you get me?

MR. PURDIE. Get you?

BATES. Do you rumble?

MR. PURDIE. Rumble?

BATES (*shaking him*). Do you understand what we're going to do?

MR. PURDIE. No.

BATES (*impressively*). We're going out on to that course together—now—to lay the odds—to make a book!

MR. PURDIE (*rises*). To—be—bookmakers?

BATES. Yes. On the public side of the track. Will you do it?

MR. PURDIE. But—we should be liable to arrest.

BATES. The cops won't touch you.

MR. PURDIE. I should be recognized—exposed!

BATES. No, you won't. Listen! I'll fix you up—disguise you. I've got a lot of old props up in my room, what I used when I was clerk to Panama Pete: satchel, panama hat, numbered briefs, and everything. Will you come?

MR. PURDIE. No, no!

BATES. Why not?

MR. PURDIE (*feebly*). I haven't got a panama hat.

BATES. There's one of Sprigge's hanging in the hall; we'll borrow that. Now will you come?

MR. PURDIE. My features are too well known.

BATES. I'll attend to your features. I know exactly where we'll stand. You'll call the odds and take the money, and I'll book the bets. What sort of a voice have you got?

MR. PURDIE (*feebly*). I haven't got a voice.

BATES. Come on! Can you do the "Six to four the fee-ald!"

stuff—the “Two to one bar one!” and all that? Let’s hear you.

MR. PURDIE. No, no, no!

BATES. Yes, yes, yes! Come on. Have a dart at it. What’s your dignity to four thousand quid!

MR. PURDIE. I am not sufficiently familiar with the vernacular.

BATES. Come on! Let’s hear from you, boy!

MR. PURDIE (*suddenly raising his voice to a high throaty chant*). Six to four the fee-ald! Six to four the fee-ald! Six to four the fee-ald! Three to one *bar* one! Four to one *bar* one! Five to one *bar* one! Six——

BATES. Steady with the odds—and spit it out a bit more! This ain’t a missionary meeting! (*Suddenly bawling.*) Six to four the fee-ald! Six to four the fee-ald!

(MR. PURDIE *joins in and they shout together ad lib.* MR. PURDIE *pauses for breath.*)

The game! The game! The greatest game in the world! Guv’nor, are you on?

MR. PURDIE. Yes!

BATES. Are you in earnest?

MR. PURDIE. Yes!

BATES. Are you going through with it?

MR. PURDIE (*shouting*). Yes.

BATES (*enthusiastically*). Partner! Partner! Fifty-fifty!

MR. PURDIE. What does that mean?

BATES. Halves, partner. Halves in all we make!

MR. PURDIE. Agreed. Fifty-fifty. Hundred-hundred if you like.

(BATES *lays his hands on MR. PURDIE’S shoulders and shakes him ecstatically.* MR. PURDIE *does the same.*)

BATES. Got any ready cash?

MR. PURDIE. A little.

BATES. Get it out of the safe, or the old teapot, or wherever it is you keep it.

(MR. PURDIE *goes obediently to the safe, opens it, and brings out a bundle of notes and some loose silver.*)

We’ve got a chance, and we’ll take it. We may win, or we may lose. We may even have to cut and run for it. Well, it won’t be the first time I’ve run, and it won’t be the first time I’ve been caught. It’s the game that matters. Oh, don’t it carry you back? Don’t it grip you by the heart to think of it all? The crowds, and the shouting, and the smell of the grass under your feet, and the feel of the sun on the back of your neck; and the silence just after the bell rings, and—they’re off! And the roar as they go by the post! Then the “All Right” and (*springs on chair*) “Pay! Pay! Pay!” Oh, guv’nor, don’t it take you back?

MR. PURDIE (*wildly*). Six to four the fee-ald!

BATES (*jetting down off chair*). Favourites are doing rotten to-day. We may pack up quite a parcel. Give me the notes! (*He takes the notes from MR. PURDIE.*) You count the silver. Come on! (*They begin to count the money.*) Five—ten—twenty—

MR. PURDIE (*half to himself, in a dazed whisper*). The game! The greatest game in the world!

BATES. Thirty—forty—fifty—

MR. PURDIE. Favourites are doing rotten to-day.

BATES. Seventy—ninety—a hundred. That's not so bad.

MR. PURDIE. We may pack up a—package.

BATES. Parcel! (*Putting the money together.*) That's all right. (*To PURDIE, indicating the silver.*) How much money have you got there?

MR. PURDIE. I haven't the slightest idea. Six to four the fee-ald! Six to four the fee-ald!

BATES. Never mind! Come along now! Six to four the fee-ald! Any price outsiders! etc.

(*They exeunt shouting. MRS. PURDIE appears at the window, studying a slip of paper. The door L. rattles. She crosses absentmindedly and unlocks it. DULCIE appears.*)

MRS. PURDIE. Why, Miss Primrose, did you lock yourself in?

DULCIE (*who thinks ALGY locked her in*). No; somebody else did. Never mind! Do you want Mr. Purdie? He's out.

MRS. PURDIE. I only wanted to telephone. Mr. Purdie gave me a note to remind me to order coal from the Co-operative Stores. But I'm so stupid about it all. The girls at the Exchange frighten me.

DULCIE. Shall I telephone for you?

MRS. PURDIE. Oh, no, thank you. I must learn to be brave, and do it myself. If you wouldn't mind waiting until I get the number and the right person at the Stores, I can manage the rest beautifully.

DULCIE. The Stores' number is Gerrard two-three-four-five.

MRS. PURDIE. Thank you, dear. (*Into the telephone.*) Good morning! Gerrard two-three-four-five, please. Yes. Thank you. (*To DULCIE, nodding.*) Aren't people obliging? She's going to get it for me: she says so. Oh, good morning! This is Mrs. Amos Purdie speaking, from Newstead Grange. It's a lovely day, isn't it? (*Listens. Then to DULCIE.*) He wants to know if I'm authorized to speak for Mr. Amos Purdie. I suppose I am, dear?

DULCIE. Of course you are.

MRS. PURDIE (*into the telephone*). I want kitchen nuts, please—a hundredweight. Yes. Kitchen nuts. I beg your pardon? Miss Primrose, you are so clever with the tradespeople. What does a

hundred each way mean? I suppose it means that the bags of coal each weigh a hundred—something?

DULCIE (*absently*). Yes, I'm sure it is, Mrs. Purdie. (*Picking up her gipsy costume.*)

MRS. PURDIE. Thank you, dear. It's sure to be all right. (*Into the telephone.*) Thank you, that is quite correct. One hundred each way of kitchen nuts. I beg your pardon? At ten to one? That will be quite early enough. Good day! (*She hangs up the receiver and rises.*) Thank you so much, Miss Primrose. I think I shall go and lie down. I have rather a headache. (*Goes towards door.*)

(DULCIE hurries ahead of her, opens the door.)

I've done the right thing this time, haven't I? Mr. Purdie will be pleased! (*Goes out.*)

(DULCIE crosses R. JOE and KATIE appear in fancy costume, and come running down the stairs. They strike an attitude at the foot.)

JOE. Behold! Uncle Ebony! (*He strikes a chord on his banjo.*)

KATIE. Pansy, the Pierrette!

(JOE strums on his banjo. KATIE begins to pirouette round the room.)

DULCIE. My dear, how perfectly sweet you look!

(*Enter TOOTHILL, as "Nimble Nip."*)

JOE and KATIE (*pointing and laughing*). Look! Look! (*They all laugh at TOOTHILL.*)

TOOTHILL. I don't see anything to laugh at. (*Producing some envelopes.*) Will any lady or gentleman give me a shilling for one of these? (*They all laugh again.*)

DULCIE. Now, tell me what mischief you three are all up to.

(*Enter ALGY in ordinary clothes, R. DULCIE immediately backs L.*)

KATIE. We're going down to the course to air our costumes for to-night.

ALGY. Won't you put on yours, too, Miss Primrose, and come with us?

DULCIE (*loftily*). No, thank you.

ALGY. Ah, do!

DULCIE. My place is beside Mr. Purdie.

(DULCIE goes out, with great dignity.)

(*Meanwhile KATIE has taken an arm each of JOE and TOOTHILL, and they strike an attitude c., doing a little step dance.*)

KATIE. How do you like us?

ALGY. Marvellous! But you mustn't hang about here. Are you all ready?

JOE and KATIE. Yes.

ALGY. Then we'll worm our way through the shrubbery and out to the course; it's only a couple of hundred yards.

KATIE (*pointing*). Look!

(*The door R. begins to open very slowly. All hide in various places.*)

(BATES' head appears, wearing an old panama hat, upon which is a broad band with "PANAMA PETE" in gold letters. Satisfied that the room is empty, he withdraws his head, then comes boldly in. He is dressed in a long white chauffeur's coat. He carries a small blackboard under one arm and betting pad under the other. He tiptoes in and returns to the door.)

BATES. All clear! Toddle in, partner.

MR. PURDIE (*voice off*). You are sure there is no one there?

BATES. Certain.

MR. PURDIE (*voice off*). I must not be recognized.

BATES. Your own mother wouldn't recognize you. Come out!

(*Enter PURDIE, reluctantly. He wears a long white coat and ALGY's panama hat, which is too small. His nose has been reddened, his chin made blue, and his eyebrows darkened. He carries an easel, wearing satchel.*)

MR. PURDIE. Two to one bar one! Two to one bar one!

(BATES joins in.)

(*Bus. BATES drags PURDIE, shouting, through French windows. They disappear together, arm in arm, still shouting.*)

(*All rise, looking at window from which they have made their exit. DULCIE appears L., and quietly takes her gipsy costume from chair.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*The same, two hours later.*

(*COOK is sitting on the sofa, knitting a jumper ; JANE is powdering her nose, sitting on PURDIE'S desk ; TWEENY is up at the window.*)

COOK. You're quite sure there's nobody about the place at all, girls ?

JANE. Only the Missis, and she's having a lay down. The house is a desert, and the garden's a Sarah. (*There is a fresh roar from the course.*)

TWEENY. Oh, did you 'ear that lovely noise, cook ?

COOK. You'll 'ear a noise you won't like, my girl, if Mr. Bates comes in and catches you at that window. Come away from it.

JANE. All the same, look at us, cooped up here all day by Master's orders !

COOK. Old Turk ! Just like an 'arem !

JANE. Mr. Bates is worst. Master only gives the orders : Mr. Bates puts us through them !

TWEENY (*fiercely*). Old Trotsky !

JANE. The races just across the road, and us not even knowing what's won the two-thirty !

COOK. And all because Master and Mr. Bates don't 'appen to be interested in racing. (*She rises.*) I'm fed up. Let's go on strike !

JANE. Hand in our notice ?

COOK. Yes, all of us three girls, and chance it !

TWEENY. 'Ooray !

JANE. I'll have to consult my fiancy, of course——

COOK. Oh, you and your blessed fiancy ! 'Ark, what's that ?

(*There is a sudden chord on a banjo outside, and three voices are heard singing in chorus.*)

TWEENY (*looking out*). It's pierrotts !

JANE (*running to the window*). No, it's Joe and Katie and that Tootle !

COOK. We must 'ook it, girls ! But they'll get no lunch from me at this hour of the afternoon. That's right, Lizzie ; bump into your betters !

(*They all hurry out. TOOTHILL, JOE and KATIE, all in their costumes, enter by window, singing "Doodah!"*)

TOOTHILL. All clear! Nobody in!

JOE. Cheers! I wonder if there's anything to eat. (*Looks round.*)

KATIE. How do you think things are going on the course, Joe? I got all mixed up with the noise.

JOE. Quite well, now.

TOOTHILL. For backers or bookmakers?

JOE. Backers, since the third race. Favourites are rolling home. The bookies are having a mouldy time of it.

KATIE. Alas, my poor father! How is he speaking his little piece now? He was badly in want of a rehearsal when I last saw him.

JOE. He's pulled himself together a good deal. In the first hour he looked like a stray cat at a dog-show.

KATIE. Yes, poor thing. He was absolutely dazed when I spoke to him. Entirely failed to recognize his only daughter.

JOE. You spoke to him?

KATIE. Yes. I put two shillings on Kitchen Nuts with him. He gave me seven to one.

JOE. Didn't Bates spot you?

KATIE. No. He had his hands pretty full. Hardly gave me a look. I had my mask on, too.

JOE (*enthusiastically*). I say, old Bates is a wonder! Did you see the way he handled that crowd—shouting the odds, taking the money, making people laugh, and gingering up Dad the whole time? He's a marvel! Good old Bates!

KATIE. Darling Bates! I should love to hear the story of his life!

TOOTHILL (*who has been sulking at the window, coming down*). Perhaps you will.

KATIE. What do you mean?

TOOTHILL. Police Court, to-morrow morning.

JOE. Toots! (*Rises.*)

TOOTHILL. Don't let me alarm you, but of course Mr. Purdie and Bates are impersonating some one else.

JOE. Panama Pete? Is there such a person?

TOOTHILL. Bound to be. Still, perhaps they won't get caught. I always look at the bright side of things!

KATIE. You mean to say Dad and Bates might—

TOOTHILL. Get pinched?—Yes.

JOE. And be brought before the local beaks in the morning?

TOOTHILL. Certainly.

KATIE. But Dad sits on the bench himself.

TOOTHILL. In that case he'll learn what it looks like from the dock. It's a great thing to study life from every angle.

JOE. If I don't get a mouthful of food from somewhere I shall pass away!

TOOTHILL. Supposing you do pass away! Into the dining-room, for instance?

JOE. Good idea! I will. (*Exit.*)

TOOTHILL (*with a satisfied sigh*). Ah! At last we find ourselves alone—what?

KATIE (*calling after JOE*). Joe dear, bring me something!

JOE (*in the distance*). Righto!

TOOTHILL. I was afraid you wouldn't!

KATIE. Wouldn't what?

TOOTHILL. React.

KATIE. What's react?

TOOTHILL. Respond instinctively to what I said.

KATIE. I'm sorry. What did you say?

TOOTHILL (*petulantly*). At last we find ourselves alone—what?

KATIE. So we are! Oh, Sir Reginald, how you notice things!

TOOTHILL. Yes; little escapes me, really. I have a very speculative nature. (*Tenderly.*) I have been speculating a good deal lately, in a certain direction.

KATIE. Yes, poor thing, and you've lost every penny! Never mind!

TOOTHILL (*desperately*). I've been *thinking*!

KATIE. Oh-o-h! So that's what's been the matter? What have you been thinking about?

TOOTHILL. You.

KATIE. Is this a proposal, by any chance?

TOOTHILL (*reprovingly*). At your age? Certainly not! I have merely been projecting my mind into the future.

KATIE. Well, don't project it too far, or you may lose it. Well?

TOOTHILL. I have been picturing you in the days to come. (*Smiles.*) I see you as a young married woman.

KATIE (*fluttered*). Married—to whom?

TOOTHILL. To the right man, of course.

KATIE (*softly*). Ah!

TOOTHILL (*coming to her*). I see I have kindled your imagination. Tell me—what sort of man is the hero of your dreams?

KATIE (*rapturously*). A man who backs outsiders at a hundred to one, and always wins!

TOOTHILL (*turning away angrily*). Bah!

(*Enter JOE with a plate of biscuits.*)

JOE. This is the best I could do. Have one, Katie?

KATIE. Thank you, Joe dear. I'm ravenous. Catch, Toots!

(*KATIE throws TOOTHILL a biscuit, he eats it sulkily.*)

(Enter DULCIE breathlessly by the window, in gipsy costume.)

DULCIE. Thank goodness there's some one here!

KATIE (*recognizing her*). Dulcie!

DULCIE. Listen, dear, something rather serious has happened. Where's Mr. Sprigge?

TOOTHILL. If matters are serious, I am here!

JOE. But what is the matter?

DULCIE. Mr. Purdie has not been doing too well. The favourite won the two-thirty race, and he and Bates had to pay out nearly all they had. I kept close to them, pretending to tell fortunes. Then people began to back Kitchen Nuts for the three o'clock: a regular rush started—

TOOTHILL. What were the odds?

DULCIE. Six to four when I left, and getting shorter.

JOE. That means that if Kitchen Nuts pulls it off Dad is booked for the cross-country championship!

DULCIE. Oh, where is Mr. Sprigge?

TOOTHILL (*crosses to DULCIE—coldly*). I am still here.

DULCIE. I'm so glad. You can find him for me.

TOOTHILL. That was not precisely what I meant.

JOE. I'll go!

KATIE. Joe, you mustn't. They'll hurt you.

JOE. Rot!

KATIE. Then I'll come with you.

TOOTHILL. Stop! This is man's work! Joe and I will go. Ladies, your place is here—or will be here, shortly. (*Puts biscuit in his mouth.*)

KATIE. Just where?

TOOTHILL (*taking JOE's arm*). By Mr. Purdie's bedside!

(TOOTHILL and JOE go out of the window. There is a roar from the course.)

KATIE. Come on, Miss Primrose; we can see the race better from up here.

(*Bell for starting race.*)

DULCIE. All right!

(DULCIE and KATIE run up to the gallery and look out of the window.)

KATIE. How long a race is it?

DULCIE. Only six furlongs. We can see them nearly all the way.

BOTH (*together*). They're off!

DULCIE. Do you see them, passing those trees?

KATIE. Yes—yes! There's a green and white horse leading. What are Kitchen Nuts' colours?

DULCIE. Red—white sleeves—red cap. There he is!

KATIE. Where?

DULCIE. Fourth. No—third! He's coming up!

KATIE (*frantically*). Oh, listen to the crowd roaring!

DULCIE (*seizing KATIE's arm*). There they are again! Kitchen Nuts is leading!

KATIE. Kitchen Nuts! I see him! My horse! My darling horse! Poor Daddy! Fourteen bob!

DULCIE. Listen! That's the finish.

KATIE. Has he won?

DULCIE. We can't see from here, but he must have done.

KATIE. Hallo, what's that? Is it the crowd cheering the winner?

DULCIE. It doesn't sound very like cheering.

KATIE. It isn't; it's booing! (*Looking out of the window.*) Look at the people on this side of the rails. They're all jumbled up.

DULCIE. They're coming this way. They're chasing a man in a long white coat!

KATIE. Daddy!

DULCIE. Mr. Purdie!

(*They cling together.*)

No, it's Bates!

KATIE. He's at the side gate. Come on, Bates! Oh! (*Screams.*) He's through!

(*There is a clang of an iron gate, and a roar of voices.*)

DULCIE. He's slammed it in their faces! (*Noise increases.*) Oh, well done, Bates!

(*BATES staggers into the room by the window, much dishevelled. DULCIE and KATIE watch him, horror-struck, from the gallery. He closes the windows breathlessly, muttering imprecations against the crowd outside. He then limps down, groaning, sees the whisky, takes a large drink, goes towards the door R.*)

(*DULCIE and KATIE come down staircase during BATES's bus.*)

BATES. A bookmakers' day! Oh, how I 'ate optimists!

KATIE and DULCIE (*together*). Bates!

(*BATES jumps.*)

Where's Mr. Purdie?

BATES. The last time I saw him, two toughs was fighting a copper for his body! (*Exit R.*)

KATIE (*running up to the window and beginning to open it*). Come on, Dulcie.

DULCIE (*going to her*). What are you going to do?

KATIE. Collect Daddy, alive or dead!

DULCIE. You can't do it. The police have got him. Didn't

you hear Bates say so ? They'll recognize him and bring him home. He'll be all right, dear. I'll telephone and make sure. You go upstairs and run on a hot bath for him, with towels and sponges and——

KATIE (*sobbing*). Splints and bandages and chloroform—and lilies ! All right !

(*Noise of crowd heard. KATIE goes out at top of stair. DULCIE, left alone, goes to the telephone. Suddenly there is a tremendous roar outside of "They've got him ! Welsher ! Boo ! Hang him ! Drown him ! Give a man a chance ! Where's our money ? " etc.*)

ALGY (*voice off—shouting against the noise*). Stand back there !

ALBERT (*pushing windows open from outside, and entering importantly*). Give him air ! Pass along quietly ! Gangway ! Make way there !

(*Amid increasing tumult a long low police ambulance is wheeled into the window by TOOTHILL right into the room. ALGY appears next, walking backwards, dressed as a policeman with a heavy black moustache. He is pushing back the crowd, the leaders of which can be seen struggling to get past him. Conspicuous among them is JOE, really helping ALGY. There is much shouting and pushing.*)

DULCIE (*running down L. and opening the door of her room*). In here, quick !

(*TOOTHILL wheels the ambulance, upon which is a motionless form covered with a blanket, out L., followed by ALBERT. DULCIE shuts the door and stands in front of it. There is a fresh roar from the crowd.*)

ALGY (*shouting them down*). Listen to me ! Listen to me, my lads, or you'll get yourselves into trouble ! You can't break into a private residence like this, you know.

OMNES. Why not ? (*There are more shouts.*)

ALGY (*making himself heard*). Listen ! This is the residence of a magistrate, Mr. Amos Purdie, J.P. That's why I've brought that man here. Mr. Purdie will sign a warrant in due form, and then I'll take the prisoner across to the lock-up, where we'll keep him until he pays you your money !

(*Angry murmur.*)

Meanwhile, you can all 'op it—if you don't want to be locked up for trespass and wilful damage. Go on ! Get out ! (*Comes down, then goes back again to window.*) Go and wait at the police-station if you like, but not in a magistrate's private garden. Sling your 'ook !

(*Exit the crowd, cheering and booing. Only DULCIE left. ALGY removes moustache and hat and comes down stage.*)

And what do you think of that ?

DULCIE. Mr. Purdie? Is it serious?

ALGY. He's rather damp, and a good deal frightened—that's all.

DULCIE. What happened?

ALGY. Shortly after one-thirty p.m., your worship, I came on duty upon the public side of the course, and proceeded to walk about. Miss Primrose, I felt so solitary that I could have cried. If ever you want to be alone in the world, remote from all human intercourse, put on a policeman's uniform and go for a walk along a crowded race-course. Anyhow, I was just going to offer a pick-pocket sixpence to come and have a drink with me, when Toots and Joe rushed up and told me some sportsmen were going to put old Purdie in the pond. It simply saved my life.

DULCIE. Tell me about Mr. Purdie's. Did you save that?

ALGY. Approximately. They had just got him under for the third time when I rolled up and butted in. I never saw Bates at all. Either he left early, or he's at the bottom of the pond.

DULCIE. Never mind Bates. How did you save Mr. Purdie?

ALGY. Oh, I just waded into the pond, hauled the old man out by the collar, and arrested him.

DULCIE. What for?

ALGY. Bathing during prohibited hours. As I dragged him out I whispered to him to sham dead, and he did. I never saw anybody sham so dead. I thought he *was* dead! So did he!

DULCIE. And where did you get that ambulance?

ALGY. That was Albert. A stout lad, Albert! I shall mention him in dispatches. He came crashing through the crowd with it just when—when I was beginning to want help rather badly. Unfortunately he brought another policeman with him—a real one, this time!

DULCIE. How did you get rid of him?

ALGY. I set him to drag the pond for Bates' remains. Then Albert and I hoisted Mr. Purdie into the ambulance, and the *cortège* moved off in an orderly manner, the last half of it throwing sods at us.

DULCIE. Mr. Sprigge! (*Going to ALGY.*) Do you know you saved his life?

ALGY. The credit was entirely yours.

DULCIE. Mine?

ALGY. Toots and Joe told me. You must have run!

DULCIE. I did.

ALGY. Atalanta! But what were you doing on the course at all? I thought you told me you weren't coming.

DULCIE. I—I changed my mind.

ALGY. Do you often do that?

DULCIE. About—things in general?

ALGY. About—people in particular! Do you?

DULCIE. Sometimes. (*She looks at him. They smile.*)

ALGY (*suddenly stooping to the waste-paper basket and picking out the cylinder*). Then—would you mind? (*He hands her the cylinder.*)

(*There is a sudden tumult outside, the sound of an approaching crowd.*)

TOOTHILL *enters through window.*)

TOOTHILL. I say, Algy!

(ALGY and DULCIE *start apart.*)

ALGY (*savagely*). Yes, of course you would butt in!

(JOE *appears beside TOOTHILL.*)

What's the matter now?

TOOTHILL. Panama Pete!

(*Noise of crowd approaching.*)

ALGY. What?

JOE. Panama Pete's coming!

ALGY (*indicating the room L.*). Coming? He's arrived!

ALGY. But the real Panama Pete!

TOOTHILL. The original firm!

ALGY. Ye gods! What does he want?

JOE. The man who's been using his name and tickets.

TOOTHILL (*with relish*). And he's got about twenty thousand people with him.

ALGY. What, again? They mustn't come in here.

TOOTHILL. But they are coming! They'll tear the house down to find him!

DULCIE. I'll telephone for the police.

TOOTHILL. Don't trouble. He's brought the police with him.

(*The crowd is heard approaching.*)

JOE. Here they come!

DULCIE. Oh, what are we to do?

ALGY. Get out of sight, you two. You'll give the show away. Up there!

JOE. Righto! Come on, Toots! (*They run up to the gallery.*)

ALGY (L.C.). Sit there, quite calmly, and back up everything I say.

(DULCIE *sits R. of the table.*)

(*Roar.*)

(*A stout, rustic police-sergeant appears at the window with PANAMA PETE, an elderly, heavily built bookmaker, much out of breath. They are followed by the same crowd as before. The SERGEANT holds these back.*)

PETE (*entering, in a strong Lancashire accent*). Now then, where's th' chap that's been impersonating of me?

ALGY. That depends on who you are, my lad.

PETE. I'm Peter Squance, of Oldham—Panama Pete. There's my card. (*Hands brightly coloured ticket.*)

ALGY (*taking it*). Very tasty! But you can't come in here with your friends. This is a gentleman's private residence.

PETE. Sergeant!

SERGEANT (*to the crowd*). Stand back there! (*He comes into the room. Nods to ALGY.*) I'm informed the man took refuge here. Do you know where he is?

ALGY. Sergeant, have you got a search-warrant?

SERGEANT (*pausing*). No. Haven't you?

ALGY. I'm expecting one any minute!

PETE. If we finds the man we're after, we shan't require no search-warrant. Go on!

(*Loud approval from the crowd. The SERGEANT hesitates, then advances.*)

DULCIE (*running to the door L.*). You can't go in there!

SERGEANT (*c.—awkwardly*). Out of the way, please, miss!

ALGY (*starting forward to SERGEANT*). Here, you leave her alone!

SERGEANT (*turning round on him, ponderously*). Hallo! Hallo! And who may you be? I don't seem to recognize you? What part of the county are you from?

ALGY (*leading him aside, in a low rapid voice*). Don't be a fool. I'm from Scotland Yard. There's a lot more behind this case than you think. I don't want it messed up. (*Takes off false moustache: business.*) Get that old lunatic outside, and send this crowd away—see?

PETE. I wants the chap what's been impersonating me. If you won't open that door, Sergeant, I will. Out of the road, lass!

(*DULCIE spreads her arms across the door. TOOTHILL and JOE seize PETE by the arm, and run him up to the window. General uproar.*)

SERGEANT. That's done it!

(*SERGEANT rushes on to the terrace and blows his whistle.*)

DULCIE. Look! The door's opening! Look!

(*Silence. TOOTHILL and ALGY let go of PETE. MR. PURDIE appears—pale, subdued, but dignified. He has got rid of all traces of his bookmaking attire.*)

SERGEANT. Mr. Purdie! (*Salutes awkwardly.*)

ALGY (*down R.*). Sportsman! He's saved us!

(*DULCIE puts MR. PURDIE's chair ready. He totters to his desk, and sits.*)

MR. PURDIE (*in a slightly dazed voice*). May I ask the meaning of this intrusion into my premises?

SERGEANT. I'm sure I'm very sorry, Mr. Purdie. I didn't know you was at home.

ALGY (*proudly*). I did!

(MR. PURDIE notices ALGY, for the first time, and starts.)

MR. PURDIE. And these persons——?

ALGY (*stepping forward briskly*). I'll attend to the matter, sir. (*Bringing the SERGEANT down.*) Clear the house and garden of all this rabble. If you manage it inside two minutes, I'll undertake not to report you to head-quarters.

SERGEANT (*dazed*). Thank you, sir! (*To CROWD.*) Come along! Pop off. You won't get a second warning!

(SERGEANT, TOOTHILL and JOE hustle the crowd out of sight, talking and arguing. The noise dies away. PETE stands transfixed by this sudden turn of events.)

(TOOTHILL and JOE re-enter. ALGY addresses them roughly.)

ALGY (*down R., producing a notebook*). Stand out there, you two men, until I want you. (*To PETE.*) Now, Mr. Squance, we're ready for you. Mr. Purdie, who is a Justice of the Peace, will investigate your case. Fortunately he has come home just in time to do so. You say some one has been impersonating you?

PETE. Yes, I do!

ALGY. Did you see the man?

PETE. No.

MR. PURDIE (*to himself*). Ah!

ALGY. Have you any evidence?

PETE. Yes. I've got 'is 'at. It was picked up.

(PETE produces a damaged Panama hat and hands it to DULCIE.)

ALGY. Has it got a name inside? (*DULCIE gives hat to PURDIE.*)

MR. PURDIE. I have not my glasses with me; I lost them, bathing. (*Hands hat back to DULCIE.*)

DULCIE (*reading*). Algernon Sprigge.

ALGY. Algernon Sprigge? (*Quite unruffled.*) That's an important clue. We can acquit everybody whose name is not Algernon Sprigge. Is that correct, Mr. Purdie?

MR. PURDIE. Quite correct, Mr. Sprigge.

(TOOTHILL and JOE snigger.)

PETE. Who are these two young chaps?

ALGY. Two detectives of mine, in plain clothes. That was why they detained you just now.

PETE. Did they see the man?

ALGY. Yes. They will give evidence later. Now, your address, Mr. Squance?

PETE. Why do you want my address?

ALGY. Mr. Purdie has an offer to make to you.

MR. PURDIE } (together). { Have I?

PETE } { Has he?

ALGY. Yes. If you will furnish Mr. Purdie with an estimate of the business lost to you to-day by the presence of this impostor on the course, Mr. Purdie, as a lover of fair play, will refund you the money.

(MR. PURDIE rises convulsively in his seat. DULCIE restrains him gently. PETE goes to him and shakes his hand vigorously.)

PETE. Eh, lad, tha's a champion!

ALGY. Don't praise him. It makes him nervous.

PETE. I see. Modest like, eh? But it's not so much the brass I'm after; it's the man!

(MR. PURDIE flinches.)

Losing money's all in the day's work with us. I once 'ad a clerk, called Bert Briggs, that went off with a monkey of mine.

MR. PURDIE. A valuable animal?

ALGY. Five hundred pounds.

MR. PURDIE. You amaze me.

PETE. I'll never see my monkey again, but I still lives in 'opes of meeting Bert. Now I must be off.

DULCIE. Won't you stay for a cup of tea?

PETE. Thank you, I don't mind if I do. Is it knife and fork?
(Sits B. of table.)

PURDIE.

ALGY, PETE.

DULCIE.

ALGY (crosses to front of sofa). I'm afraid the butler is a trifle—indisposed.

(At these words the door opens and BATES appears, immaculate except for a black eye, with tea tray. PETE is occupied with DULCIE and MR. PURDIE.)

BATES (in a most suave tone). I thought you'd like tea, sir.

ALGY. You've got back then, Bates!

BATES (with the dignity of a bishop). Back, sir? I haven't been out. I've been spending the afternoon reading: an old friend—
Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

ALGY. Foxe's book of starters ?

BATES. Martyrs !

ALGY. You appear to have sprained your eye in the process,
Bates. Well, serve tea.

BATES. Yes, sir. (*Crosses to PETE, who has his back to him talking to DULCIE.*) Tea, sir ?

DULCIE (*drawing his attention*). Tea, Mr. Squance ?

(*PICTURE : BATES is paralysed for a moment ; then turns and starts to go, as PETE turns and sees him.*)

PETE. I should know that back anywhere ! Here—*Bert Briggs !*

(*BATES, run to ground, turns as if mesmerized.*)

BATES (*throwing tray into PETE's hands*). Hold that !

(*They exit, by window, PETE with tray chasing BATES.*)

JOE (*to TOOTHILL*). Come on, Toots !

(*They dash out, whooping. The noise dies away.*)

ALGY (*taking off his helmet*). I rather fancy we have a vacancy for a butler. What do you think, Mr. Purdie ?

(*PURDIE looks up at him uncomprehendingly for a moment, then collapses, with his head on his arms. ALGY and DULCIE look at one another. He suggests by a look that she should leave them. She nods, and he opens the door for her. She gives him a look as she goes out L.*)

Now, Mr. Purdie, we must pull ourselves together.

(*MR. PURDIE lifts his head and looks up vacantly.*)

MR. PURDIE (*in a hollow voice*). How can I ever look the world in the face again—a disgraced and ruined man !

ALGY. Ruined ? What have you lost ?

MR. PURDIE. Over four thousand pounds in the last ten days !

ALGY. Great Cæsar ! What have you been backing ?

MR. PURDIE (*mournfully*). Great Cæsar—yesterday !

ALGY. At thirty-three to one on ? Two runners !

MR. PURDIE. I did not understand. I thought it was against. I have lost thirty-three hundred pounds on the animal in question. Oh !

ALGY (*takes PURDIE's betting-book from desk and examines it*). Nonsense ! You only lost a hundred. You got mixed up between odds on and odds against, that's all. Only twelve hundred and fifty altogether.

MR. PURDIE. That's bad enough.

ALGY. Experience is always cheap, Mr. Purdie. (*He goes R. and pours out some whisky.*)

MR. PURDIE (*frantically*). Cheap? Do you realize my position? I have fallen into the sin of betting and gambling—and, what is worse, I have been found out! My self-respect is gone for ever!

ALGY. Rot! You've had a bad fright, and you've been hit in your tenderest spot—your pocket—that's all. Don't be such an old pincher in the future. (*Coming to PURDIE with whisky.*) Here, swallow that, and let me see a smile on that sad little face!

MR. PURDIE. But this is whisky!

ALGY. Medicinal!

MR. PURDIE. Oh! Medicinal! (*Drinks.*)

ALGY. Now smile!

(*PURDIE forces a smile.*)

That's better!

MR. PURDIE. Six to four the——! (*Hurriedly.*) Oh! How can a man smile when he is disgraced before his own household!

ALGY. Household? I like that! Your prestige in that quarter has gone up a thousand per cent.—and I'll tell you why. Everybody under this roof, except Mrs. Purdie, backs horses. You didn't know that, did you?

MR. PURDIE. I did not.

ALGY. Well, they do. Can't you see how this is going to boost your stock? Your children will rise up and call you sportsman! Your cook and housemaid will say to one another: "What's the old man's selection this morning? We must follow the old man! The old man knows! The old man is Grand Master of the Lodge! The old man is Colonel of the Nuts!" Think of that!

MR. PURDIE. I cannot believe that the members of my household would respect me if they realized that I had sunk to their level.

ALGY. Then I'll prove my words. May I ring the bell? (*Rings the bell.*)

(*Enter KATIE, down the stairs. She has changed into ordinary clothes, and is determined to take advantage of the present situation. On seeing her father she sniffs in a superior manner.*)

MR. PURDIE (*feebly*). Is that you, Katie?

KATIE. Yes, father. (*Sniffs.*) Is that you?

MR. PURDIE. Why do you ask?

KATIE. I saw a man running away across the fields just now, with a crowd of people after him. I thought he might be you—that's all. (*Sniffs.*)

MR. PURDIE (*to ALGY, despairingly*). You see!

(*The door opens R. and COOK, JANE, TWEENY and ALBERT enter in single file.*)

ALGY. Good afternoon, Cook! Good afternoon, Jane! Good afternoon——?

LIZZIE. Lizzie, sir.

ALGY. Of course—Lizzie. How good of you all to come.

COOK. I wish to give notice, sir.

JANE. Me too, sir.

LIZZIE. Me also, sir!

ALGY. Do you wish to give notice, Albert?

ALBERT. No, sir; I came in here to stop the girls.

ALGY. Quite right. But first of all, we'll sit down. Three chairs for the ladies.

ALBERT (*a little confused, lustily*). 'Ip, 'ip——

ALGY (*hastily*). Chairs, you fool!

(ALGY and ALBERT bring chairs from the walls and set them in a row between the desk and sofa. The three servants sit, self-consciously.

DULCIE enters L., and takes her usual seat beside MR. PURDIE.

ALGY stands behind MR. PURDIE throughout. ALBERT is behind the maids.)

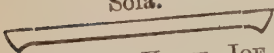
ALBERT.

○

○ ALGY.

Sofa.

PURDIE. DULCIE.



TOOTHILL. KATIE. JOE. COOK. LIZZIE. JANE.



Now, are we all here? No! Mrs. Purdie, Sir Reginald, Mr. Joe——

(TOOTHILL and JOE come tramping in by the window. TOOTHILL has the sugar-basin.)

JOE. We've got the tea things back.

TOOTHILL (*suddenly seeing the gathering in the room*). Hallo, what's all this? (*Gloomily*.) Prayers?

ALGY. Come on! Come in! Just in time. Sit down.

KATIE. Over here, Joe.

(JOE sits on the sofa by KATIE. They talk in excited whispers.

TOOTHILL sits on her R.)

ALGY. (*Clearing his throat*.) My friends, I have called you together this afternoon to reveal to you a very remarkable public service which has recently been rendered to the world at large by some one very near to us—our friend, our employer, our parent—Mr. Purdie. Mr. Purdie has just concluded, almost single-handed, a campaign to purge and purify the turf—in the interests entirely of true sport. For some weeks Mr. Purdie has studied his subject

at first-hand. He has mingled with all classes of society. He has descended, when necessary, into the lowest depths.

LIZZIE. Ooh!

ALGY. You may well say "Ooh!" Lizzie. But Mr. Purdie was not alone: I was with him. (ALBERT *applauds*.) Thank you, Albert. I had hired this costume for a fancy dress ball, to which, with Mr. Purdie's permission, I am escorting the members of his family to-night.

(MR. PURDIE *sinks back resignedly. There is loud applause from JOE and KATIE, in which the others finally join.*)

Mr. Purdie's report is now ready for publication. In it Mr. Purdie plumps for the legalization of betting, the registration of book-makers, and—the provision of a more adequate system of police protection for genuine sportsmen. A noble programme!

(ALGY *makes the motion of clapping his hands, unscen by MR. PURDIE. All clap vigorously.*)

One point more. Tell Mr. Purdie how you have got on to-day; and in return for your trouble he authorizes me to say that he will make good any losses which you may have incurred. (To PURDIE, *in an undertone.*) Say yes!

(*Bus. MR. PURDIE rising and ALGY restraining him.*)

Cook, how have you done this afternoon?

COOK (*half rising, and bowing again*). I have won four and sixpence on the day, sir—on Kitchen Nuts.

ALGY. I congratulate you. Lizzie?

(LIZZIE *promptly bursts into tears, and buries face on COOK's shoulder.*)

Lizzie is unstrung.

(*An exchange of sobs and whispers takes place between the COOK and LIZZIE.*)

COOK. She's won three and sixpence, sir. She's a little upset, that's all.

ALGY. Now, Jane, how did you come out?

JANE (*with a slight sniff*). I lost three shillings, sir. (*Hesitating.*) I backed Sweet William, sir.

ALGY. Now, why?

(JANE *puts her finger in her mouth, and casts down her eyes.*)

ALBERT. William is the name of the chauffeur, sir.

ALGY. Albert, have you won anything to-day?

ALBERT (*glancing nervously towards MR. PURDIE*). Not more than 'alf a dollar, sir.

MR. PURDIE (*looking up, with a slight return of his old authoritative manner*). But how do you all execute these wagers?

ALGY. Albert puts the money on for them, Mr. Purdie. Who is your bookmaker, Albert?

ALBERT. The blind man, sir, at the corner of High Street, what sings hymns.

MR. PURDIE (*in a deep voice*). And I once gave him a penny!

ALGY (*to the servants*). Well, my dear friends, before we break up I think it would be fitting to offer a formal vote of thanks from all present to Mr. Purdie, for his public-spirited efforts in our interests.

(*All applaud.*)

MR. PURDIE (*rises—in a rather shaky voice*). I—I thank you. I have only one remark to make. It is probable that in the near future I shall dispose of this house and move somewhere else—probably to Cricklewood. I propose to dispense with the services of a butler. In fact, Bates has already handed in his resignation.

(*Loud applause from all.*)

ALGY. Good afternoon, all. Shake hands with Mr. Purdie as you go out.

(*Exeunt servants, having shaken hands. Telephone rings. DULCIE answers it. As ALBERT goes out, ALGY detains him.*)

Albert, just remember that real sportsmen never split. (*Hands ALBERT a pound note.*)

ALBERT. Thank you, sir!

DULCIE (*at telephone*). It's a call for Mrs. Purdie.

ALGY. Jane, Mrs. Purdie is wanted on the telephone.

(*JANE goes upstairs.*)

MR. PURDIE (*rousing himself, to JOE and KATIE*). I wish to say something. Katie, I think there is no need for your mother to be informed of my recent activities. She would certainly fail to appreciate their purpose, and it would probably shock her to know that every member of this household has been gambling!

KATIE (*produces a bookmaker's ticket and hands it to her father*). In that case, Dad, the sooner this is cashed and torn up the better.

(*MR. PURDIE takes the ticket and stares at it.*)

MR. PURDIE (*in a hollow voice*). Were you there too, child?

KATIE. Rather! Sixteen shillings, please!

MR. PURDIE. Oh, very well.

(*MR. PURDIE mechanically puts his hand where his satchel would have been; then corrects himself, and takes money out of his pocket.*)

There's a pound for you, my child; you can keep the change.

KATIE (*kissing him*). Thank you, darling! (*Going up*.) I'm off to spend this.

TOOTHILL. I say, can I come with you?

KATIE. Fortune hunter!

(*Exeunt KATIE and TOOTHILL, by the window.*)

MR. PURDIE (*to JOE*). What do I owe you, my boy?

JOE (*producing a number of tickets and tearing them up, gloomily*). Nobody owes me anything, Dad.

MR. PURDIE. Ah, favourites have been doing rotti— Here's a pound for you, my boy. You're a good boy, but wash your face!

JOE. Dad! (*Shakes hands*.) You sportsman! (*Exit JOE upstairs*.)

MR. PURDIE. You see! Sportsman!

DULCIE (*into the telephone*). I have sent for Mrs. Purdie. She will be here in a moment.

MR. PURDIE. Who is it?

DULCIE (*into the telephone*). Who is speaking, please? (*She turns to MR. PURDIE*.) Mr. Martin Maggs.

MR. PURDIE (*frantic*). No, no! He's going to tell her about me! Stop him!

(*MRS. PURDIE appears on the stair. ALGY is restraining PURDIE from rushing to the telephone.*)

MRS. PURDIE (*nervously*). Does some one want me?

DULCIE. On the telephone, Mrs. Purdie.

MRS. PURDIE. Thank you, my dear. (*To MR. PURDIE*.) Oh, I'm so stupid and nervous!

ALGY. Let me help you, Mrs. Purdie.

MRS. PURDIE. Thank you so much!

ALGY (*picking up the telephone and receiver*). Hallo! Is that Martin Maggs? Good afternoon! I'm speaking for Mrs. Purdie. What is it, please? She did what? (*He listens; his face breaks into a broad grin. Then he laughs helplessly*.) Yes, I think that's a most sensible suggestion, and I'm sure both Mr. and Mrs. Purdie will agree. I'll get it confirmed in writing by to-night's post. Good-bye, and God bless you! (*He hangs up the receiver, and puts down the telephone.*)

MR. PURDIE (*frantically*). What is it?

ALGY. Mrs. Purdie, did you by any chance ring anybody up just before one o'clock to-day?

MRS. PURDIE (*considering*). Yes, the Stores.

ALGY. What did you order?

MRS. PURDIE (*produces paper*). A hundredweight of kitchen nuts.

(*Everybody starts.*)

ALGY. As it happened, you got the wrong number. You got a bookmaker, and backed a horse of that name at ten to one, for a hundred pounds each way, and won twelve hundred and fifty.

MRS. PURDIE (*horrified and terrified; turning to her husband*). Oh, Amos! Can you ever forgive me?

ALGY. Mr. Purdie, it appears that your account with them on the debit side is exactly the same as Mrs. Purdie's on the credit side, and the wager may be regarded as cancelled. Otherwise they will have pleasure in sending you a cheque.

MRS. PURDIE. Oh dear, no. I couldn't touch it!

ALGY. That is just what I took the liberty of saying. So you can regard the whole affair as a washout.

MRS. PURDIE. Thank you so much, Mr. Sprigge. (*Timidly to her husband*.) Is that right, father?

(MR. PURDIE looks at her intently for a moment. His expression softens. He takes up the bundle of blue slips of paper from the desk, tears them in two, and drops them into the waste-paper basket. Then he turns to MRS. PURDIE.)

MR. PURDIE. Quite right—mother!

MRS. PURDIE (*proudly*). He's spoken to me again—and the fortnight isn't up!

MR. PURDIE. Let us go into the garden, for a bit of fresh air. (*He gives MRS. PURDIE his arm*.) Come along, my dear.

(MR. and MRS. PURDIE go up to the window. The moment their backs are turned DULCIE hastily picks up ALGY's dictaphone record, adjusts it on the repeating machine, slips the headpiece on, and sits listening.)

ALGY (*following PURDIE*). Do you really want a tenant for this house, sir?

MR. PURDIE. Yes, I have become too well known in this neighbourhood. In Cricklewood, thank God, a man can keep himself to himself.

(*There is a shout from the course.*)

Is that another race?

ALGY (*looking at his watch*). Yes—the last race.

MR. PURDIE (*sadly almost*). My last race!

ALGY. Do you regret it, sir?

MR. PURDIE. Honestly—I think I do.

(ALGY offers his hand. They shake hands.)

MRS. PURDIE (*surprised, timidly*). Father dear!

MR. PURDIE. Mother, I'm going to tell you something—everything! (*Puts his arm around her*.) Come!

(*They go out by the window.*)

(ALGY looks after them, smiles, and comes down. He stands looking out at DULCIE, she takes off her headpiece and looks up.)

ALGY. Who's that you're listening to now?

DULCIE. Waxen Willie. And he's quite right.

ALGY. Ah!

DULCIE (c.). You're a bad, bad starter—— (Going to him.)

ALGY (gloomily). Oh!

DULCIE. But I think you can stay!

ALGY (smiling and resuming his policeman's attitude). I may take you into custody!

DULCIE. On what charge?

ALGY. As a disturber of the peace—my peace! Will you come quietly? Willingly?

DULCIE. What's the sentence?

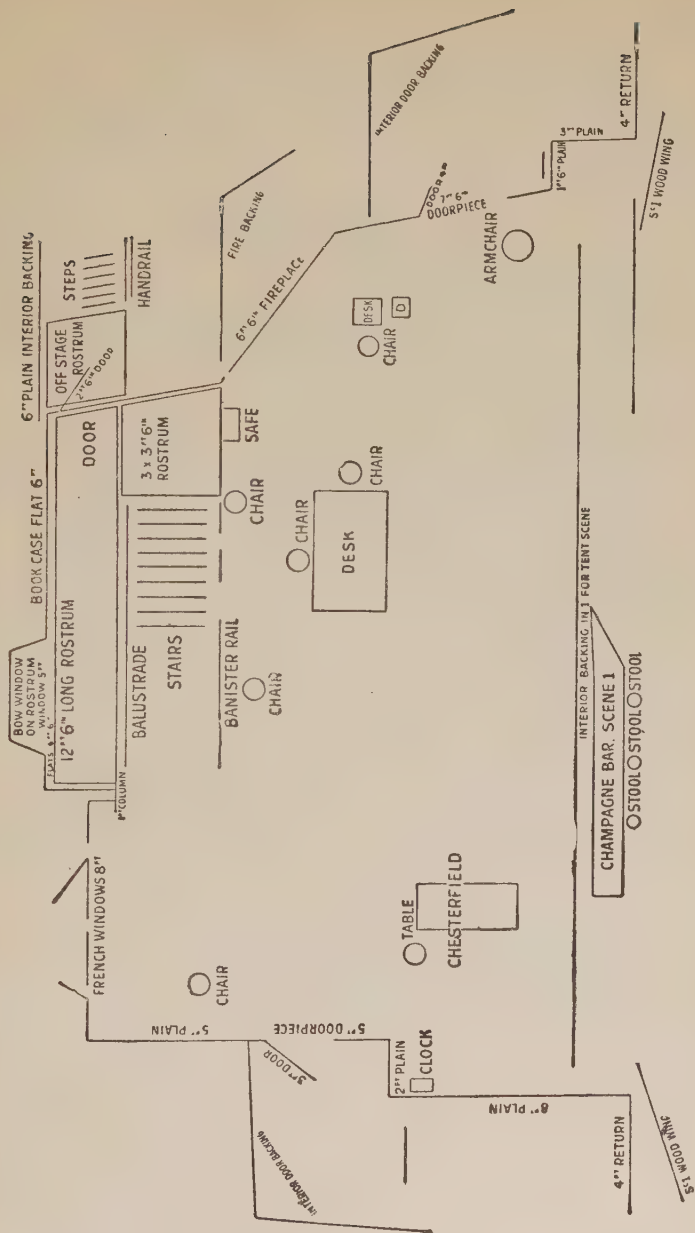
ALGY. A life sentence—two life sentences—to be served here, in your old home, given back to you, with goodwill and fixtures. I am the fixtures! (Embrace.)

(MR. and MRS. PURDIE enter from back.)

MR. PURDIE. Oh, Mr. Sprigge! (Sees them embracing.) I beg your pardon!

CURTAIN

EXTERIOR GROUND ROW



2. TO 1st SCALE

PROPERTIES

Gas fire (small) alight in fireplace.

Arm-chair, below door L.

Typist's desk, down stage L.C., with typewriter, typing paper, documents, super-tax form, bill from Co-operative Stores, notelook and pencil, telegraph form.

Dictaphone B. of table (dictator).

Typist's chair at table.

Waste-paper basket in front of table.

PURDIE'S desk.

Oak desk with drawers L.C. containing dictaphone (receiver).

Telephone, bell-pushes, blotter, presentation inkstand, paste, pen and pencil, dictaphone note pad, slips of blue paper, 5 unopened letters.

In drawer L., plain writing-paper.

In drawer R., 1 typed letter, 3 coloured letters (Bookies' circulars).

Revolving desk chair (behind desk).

Waste-paper basket B. of desk.

Chair L. of desk.

Safe up stage L.C., containing cash-box, £5, £1, 10s. notes and bag or silver.

Chair B. of safe.

Chair below foot of stairs.

Leather chesterfield couch down stage B.

Occasional table behind couch with vase of flowers.

Grandfather's clock below door B.

Chair above door B.

4 photographs in frames, on mantelpiece, pair of candlesticks.

Off R. :—

Motor effects.

Clock chimes.

Telegram in envelope for DULCIE B.

2 letters, to sign, for DULCIE L.

Bunch of keys for ALGY.

Book of Rules for ALGY.

3 coloured letters for ALGY. (Bookies' circulars.)

1 pink letter with enclosed stamped envelopes. (Bookies' ditto.)

Pencil on desk.

LIGHTING PLOT

ACT I. SCENE I

Full up everywhere. Amber from lower perches. White from upper. Black out at end of scene.

SCENE II

Full up everywhere. Lengths at all doors. Amber from lower perches, frosted white from upper perches.

Length tied behind ground row above perforations for motors. 1 stage are each side on Backing.

Stage connections for dictaphone, P.S.

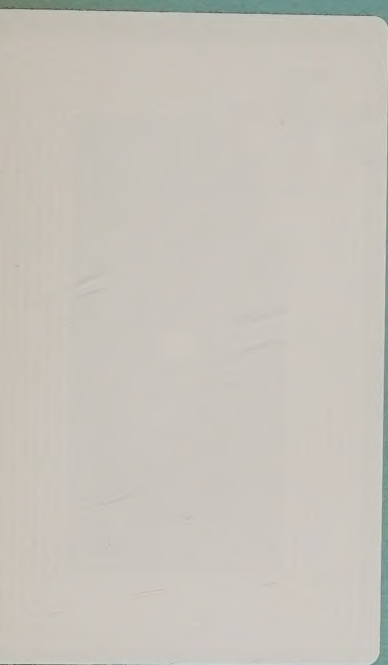
Four red lamps for gas fire.

Four red lamps for coal fire (Acts II and III).

ACTS II AND III

The above stands. Gas fire is changed for coal for Acts II and III.

Floats. Battens 1 and 2 and back batten, white and amber.



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JOHN DIGHTON



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